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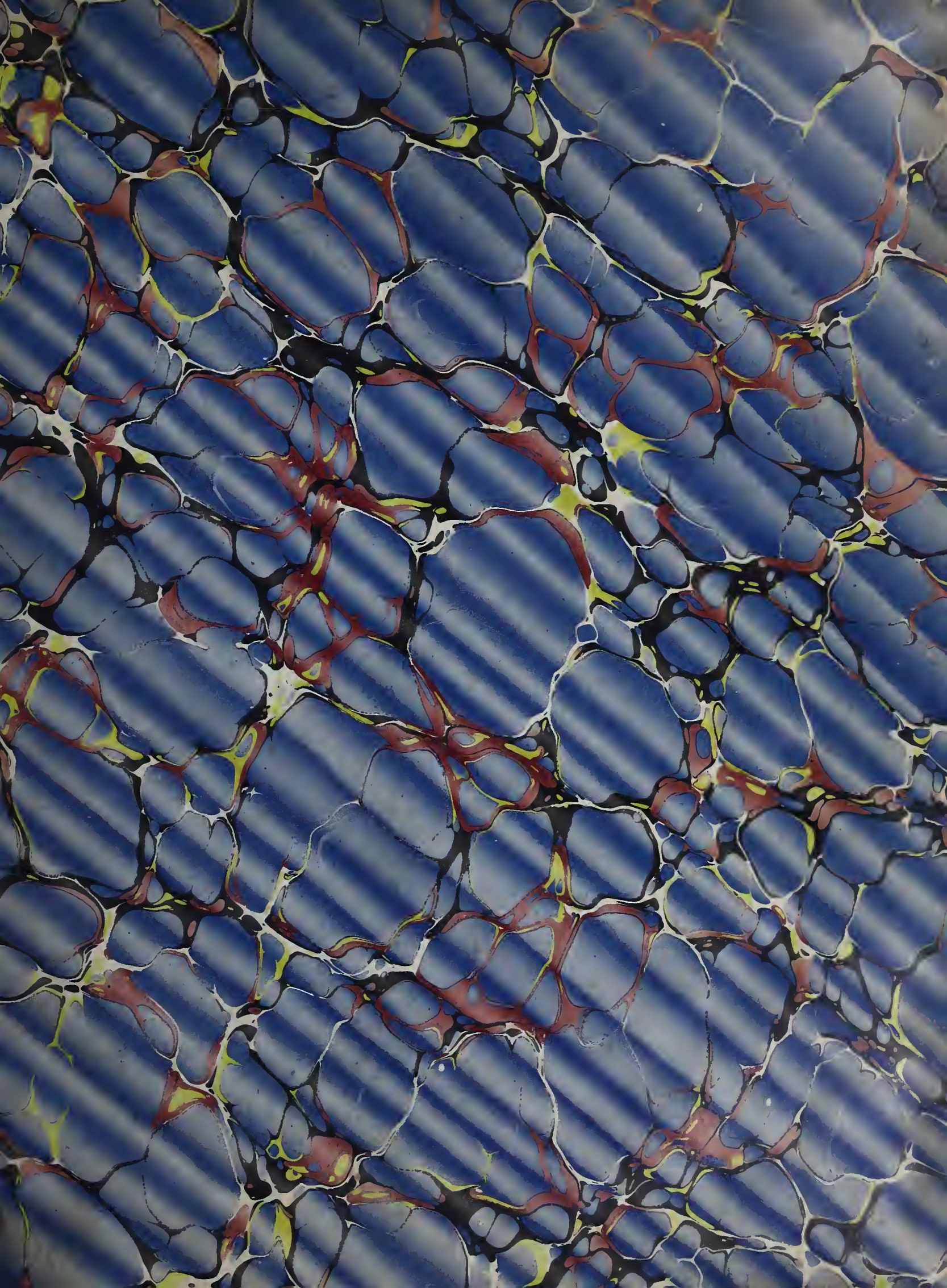
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H I S T O R Y  
OF  
E N G L A N D,

VOL. II.

FROM  
THE ACCESSION OF EDWARD THE FIRST,  
TO  
THE DEATH OF HENRY THE FIFTH.

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BY  
*SHARON TURNER, F.S.A.*

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## P R E F A C E.

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THIS Second Volume continues the History of England, from the accession of Edward the First to the death of Henry the Fifth. The next Volume will extend it to the accession of Elizabeth, and complete the Author's design, which has been to lay before the Public the History of the English nation during the middle ages—during that period which has been the least studied and the most negligently written; but within which our political relations, our religion, literature, language, manners, laws, and constitution, have been chiefly formed. From the accession of Elizabeth, our history has been more carefully discussed, and intelligently, though variously, narrated by several writers. This reign has therefore appeared to the present Author, to be the proper boundary of his undertaking. By the time that the Third and last Volume will appear, the leisure of thirty years will have been applied to the laborious, but pleasing task. The Author must then begin to recollect the Horatian counsel, 'Solve senescentem, maturè sanus, equum.' Other duties will leave less time for literary gratification. He cannot expect to have either the industry or the capability for labour, which in the earlier parts of life are rather matter of amusement than toil. This Work, with the History of the Anglo-Saxons, will have conducted the History of his country through the space of above fifteen hundred years—a period long enough to exhaust the powers and to satisfy the ambition of any candidate for public approbation.



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# HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

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## PART III.

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### CHAP. I.

SKETCH OF THE STATE OF EUROPE FROM THE ELEVENTH  
CENTURY TO THE FOURTEENTH.

THE political state of Europe at the Norman conquest, exhibited the infancy of the nations, which became afterwards the most celebrated in its history. From this period, progression is visible in every part of the Continent.

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But although, from the constitutional uniformity of human nature, the attainments of any one state are possible to all, and are evidences of the melioration which may be generally acquired, yet the progress of each, must correspond with its temporary means and opportunities of advancing. The desire, which every individual possesses, of bettering his condition, and the constant efforts which all are making for this purpose, impart to society an universal and perpetual tendency to improve. Every part struggling to advance, the whole is inevitably impelled forward. The theatre of life is not indeed a smooth and level surface; we do not glide through



our favourite paths like the vessel with her swelling canvass through the yielding ocean; impediments and counteracting agencies continually occur; and therefore, though the advancing tendency be incessant and insuppressible, the result must be the complicated effect of the impulse and the obstruction. Yet the obvious improvements of society from its condition in the eleventh century, are proofs that the meliorating energy has been the superior power, though its operation has varied according to the differences of position, intercourse, national relations, local advantages, habits, territorial extent, external exigencies, and interior polity, of every country. The population of one age is never under the same circumstances with that which has preceded or which follows. The retarding and accelerating agencies are therefore always varying, as well as their consequences, in every nation and at every period.

Hence the historical and intellectual map of Europe must be expected to display from time to time very multifarious, dissimilar, and changeable appearances—Some states urged by evolving circumstances into activity and prominence, and then receding into comparative and often more useful obscurity; some eclipsing, but to emerge with brighter splendor; some wasting, from their political vices, into feebleness and oblivion; and some, like England, advancing with steady progress, obtaining perpetual accessions of civilization, and scattering them productively around. Spain, Italy, and France, as well as England, have in different æras led the march of European civilization. Germany has emulously followed; and others in succession have contributed their aids to the great social progress; till Europe has advanced to a moral and intellectual elevation which the ancients could not reach, from which she has never retroceded, and which may now be deemed a basis from which human nature will be ever soaring to nobler heights.

The

The present sketch cannot be allowed to depict all these mutabilities and improvements. The selection of a few leading circumstances in the history of the principal nations of the Continent is all that can be inserted here, without a disproportionate digression. But these may provide the mind of the reader with that general view of the horizon of Europe, during the period to which this Work is confined, which will enable him to proceed through our English annals with more just conceptions of their bearings and relations; and of the contemporary state and civilizing progress of our continental neighbours; with more distinct views of the causes of some of the greater events, and with clearer anticipations of their exterior results, and of our comparative position.

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Beginning our survey of Europe from Norway, the country from which our Roman ancestors had sprung, we may remark, that the expedition of Sigurdr to Palestine in 1109, was the last effusion of its ancient heroism. In this voyage, the youthful warrior, for he was scarcely nineteen, touching at Portugal, defeated the Mohamedans at Cintra and Lisbon<sup>1</sup>; conflicted with the Moors in Africa, and in the Isle of Ivica and Minorca<sup>2</sup>; reached the Holy Land, captured Sidon; and, on his return, after visiting Constantinople, passed by land through Hungary to Sleswick, and rejoined in safety his brothers in Norway, with whom he shared the regal sway<sup>3</sup>. After his death in 1130, until 1300, Norway was ravaged by competitors for its petty crown. Successively slaughtered,

<sup>1</sup> Snorre has preserved the verses of the Scald Halldor on these exploits, who names he towns "Sintre" and "Lissibon." vol. 3. p. 234, 235.

<sup>2</sup> Snorre calls Africa Serkland. The Scald names the Moors blamanna and serkiom, or blackland and blackmen. The modern appellations of the islands appear in the Scalds verses, Ivitzo and Manork. p. 238.

<sup>3</sup> Snorre, 241. Theodoric, the contemporary of Sievard, says that he sank into an inferior prince, from some noxious potation. Hist. Norv. 63. The next note probably shews what this really was. The Scald Einar, who sings Sievard's actions, calls Acre *Akrsborg*; Jerusalem, *Jorsala*; and Sidon, *Sætt*. Snorre, 241 & 242.



slaughtered, new combatants were set up by the turbulent provinces to revive the contest; till Norway, exhausted by civil bloodshed, to which its domestic customs led<sup>4</sup>, sank with a diminished population into that state of feeble quiet, from which it never emerged; which was most compatible with its own moral good, and with the general comfort of its neighbours and of Europe<sup>5</sup>. It soon afterwards became appended to Sweden, from which, at a subsequent period, it was abstracted by Denmark.

Denmark.

The principal wars of this country during the twelfth century, were with the Slavonic nations between the Elbe and Oder, whose depression was auxiliary to their civilization. The Danish Sovereign who first distinguished himself at this period, was Waldemar, who, after a severe exertion, conquered and destroyed the rich pagan city of Jomsberg<sup>6</sup>. He, and his son Canute, pursued the Slavonian tribes with hostilities that gradually debilitated them<sup>7</sup>; and Waldemar II. who acceded in 1202, adopting the military politics of his predecessors, extended his dominion along the Baltic, from Holstein to Russia<sup>8</sup>. Taken prisoner by stratagem, he occasioned the impoverishment of Denmark by the money exacted

<sup>4</sup> We have these manners described by a Norwegian author, who lived 1187. "In all the cities of the kingdom the uniform custom of inebriety prevails, which breaks all their alliances of peace, instigates even the mild to deeds of cruelty, and makes crimes to be thought a joke. Their drinking *without measure* produces this evil, because the citizens, excited by wine, seize their arms and rush to wickedness. They take no care to refrain their hands from shedding the blood of the innocent: and therefore you will find more horrible actions among them than in any other country." De Prof. Dan. in terram Sanct. Kirchm. 746.

<sup>5</sup> Snorre, 294, to the end of his History. Krantz Norwegia, 414—418. This author

gives an instance of the poverty of Norway: By its dried fish it purchased part of its necessities of subsistence. One of its kings quarrelling with the German merchants who visited the coast, they blocked up its ports, and starved the country into submission. This was about 1280.

<sup>6</sup> Saxo is fullest and most authentic in his history of his friend and patron Waldemar. 269—373.

<sup>7</sup> With the reign of Canute VI. Saxo closes his elaborate History, which, with all its faults, has the merit of exhibiting a genius to which Denmark, always scanty in its intellectual produce, has not since produced an equal.

<sup>8</sup> Pontanus Hist. Dan. 296—309.



exacted for his ransom. Most of his acquisitions were torn from him. Denmark was disappointed in her proud hope of acquiring the sceptre of the North, for which she was unfit; and this king died in 1241, an instance of the mutability of human prosperity<sup>9</sup>. Inferior sovereigns, murders, civil feuds, and unimportant warfares, fill up the Danish history to the end of the century, displaying the imperfections of the social character of Denmark, and precluding it from attaining any important rank among the princes of the Continent<sup>10</sup>. Its ancient fierceness dwindled, from the internal calamities which it produced, into comparative debility. As a better national character arose, it began in the fourteenth century to revive under Waldemar III.<sup>11</sup> and attained a substantial importance, when Norway became united to it by hereditary succession, and when Margaret, the princess whose marriage with Hacon, king of Norway, had occasioned the connexion, was also invited by the Swedes to be their sovereign. This able woman formed the grand project of uniting the three crowns of Scandinavia upon one head<sup>12</sup>; and in 1396, the estates of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, met at Colmar to effectuate it. The great union was agreed to, and

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<sup>9</sup> His misfortune was owing to his own misconduct. The duke of Schwerin, going to the holy land, committed his wife to the care of Waldemar, who abused his trust. The duke, in revenge, on his return watched him when he was hunting, seized, bound, and carried him off. Vilfeldius ap. Pontanus, p. 309.

<sup>10</sup> The Danish king Eric, in his *Historia gentis Danorum*, a brief but not ill-selected series of annals, thus remarks: "In Waldemar the Second, fell the crown of the Danish head. After him, from intestine wars and mutual destruction, the Danes became the derision of the nations around. They not only lost the territories which their fathers had gloriously acquired, but miserably wounded their own country." p. 305. ed. Linden.

<sup>11</sup> He had many wars with the Hanse Towns, and died 1375. His grandson Olaus V. succeeded him, the son of his daughter Margaret by the king of Norway. Pont. Hist. l. 8. p. 463—511. Olave died 1387.

<sup>12</sup> Pontanus narrates her reign in his ninth book, 513—544. Returning from Sleswick into Denmark, she died suddenly on board the ship, either from some pestilential contagion, or, as the Danish historian gravely remarks, from the disagreeable marine effluvia, "because the sensibility of the fair sex to odours is more subtle than ours." p. 544.

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and Europe might have soon felt the consequences of the hardest sons of Scandinavia associated in one kingdom, and warring under one banner; but neither of these kingdoms had sufficient virtue or intellect to make the incorporation permanent; and, from the Swedish spirit of turbulence or independence, and the Danish love of power and oppression, it soon became but a statesman's dream<sup>13</sup>.

Sweden.

The history of Sweden, emerging from the habits, and still struggling with the effects, of its ancient ferocity, has the same barbarous features which the two last mentioned kingdoms displayed during the twelfth and succeeding centuries. Its provinces of Gothland at first contended with the other Swedes, for the right of appointing to the crown. At some times, the Danes invaded, though not successfully, and at others internal factions arose. The competitors for royalty murdered each other, and the offspring, whose claims were in opposition to their own. The greater families increased the evil by their turbulence; and Sweden, thus attenuated by the same spirit of violence and mischief which had weakened Norway and Denmark, made no progress in its political rank, and but little in its social improvements, till the fourteenth century closed<sup>14</sup>. Their interior commotions, however, kept them externally quiet, and they gradually disciplined themselves into order, frugality, temperance, and decorous life.

It may be said of all these three nations, that too many of their ancient customs, too much of their former fame and spirit, popular poetry, venerated traditions, and national pride, remained among them, for their population to be tranquil.

Wherever

<sup>13</sup> Puffendorf refers the decline of the Danes to their nobility devoting themselves to the enjoyment of their revenues, and to their habit of employing Germans for their soldiers instead of their own population. The king

also, jealous of his nobles, encouraged their aversion to military exploits. *Introd. Hist. Europe*, c. 9. p. 345.

<sup>14</sup> Loccenius *Hist. Suec.* p. 72—96.



Wherever they looked around, rocks and stones, engraved with the names and exploits of their ancestors, appeared. Tumuli on every shore raised their green summits, to remind them of the battles and of the glory of preceding times. Family histories and the spoils acquired by ancient piracy, carefully preserved as the relics of departed greatness, were every where goading the descendants to be discontented at their inferiority and inactivity. Too ignorant and too proud, for Christianity to have its proper influence, it is probable that, by diverging into internal conflicts, they employed and consumed that spirit which might otherwise have again afflicted Europe. Their domestic misery was their own production; but it benefited the rest of the world, by preventing the Baltic from becoming a region of Scandinavian Algerines. They conflicted at home, till the recollection of their popular Vikingr was eradicated by the new themes of activity and turbulent reputation which arose in their civil feuds; till their scalds became unpatronized and disused in the new habits, sufferings and vicissitudes of the great; till Papal Christianity gave their character some useful features, even by its superstitions; and till due experience taught them to value the domestic comforts and social order of peaceful and unambitious life. As the fourteenth century ended, Sweden had effected a visible advance. The union of the Northern crowns under Margaret of Denmark, though it failed to combine them in a state of permanent peace, yet kept them tranquil for several years; and Eric, her sister's son, whom she had raised to the Swedish throne, succeeded to the three sceptres, and was important enough to obtain in marriage the daughter<sup>15</sup> of our Henry IV. A fierce warlike competition between Sweden and Denmark, in the fifteenth century, operated to the benefit of both. The foreign war terminated their domestic conflicts, increased their national patriotism,

<sup>15</sup> Eric's reign may be read in Pontanus, 547—616.



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Finland.

patriotism, and excited and consolidated their internal resources, energies, and strength. Sweden became an independent monarchy, and darted afterwards into a political importance, advantageous to her own people and to all Europe.

The barbarous population of the contiguous country of Finland had long annoyed the Swedes by their depredations. In the middle of the twelfth century, they were subdued in a battle so destructive, that the Swedish conqueror lamented it with tears. They were compelled to adopt his religion, but with surly acquiescence; and the archbishop who was instructing them, was murdered by the chieftain on whom he was imposing penance<sup>16</sup>. From that time, Finland continued to be an appendage to the Swedish crown.

North of  
Germany.

The regions extending from the Elbe to the Eider and the Baltic, were in the first part of the twelfth century under the government of the Slavi, whose princes or tribes maintained wars, rarely intermitted, with the Danes, Holsatians, Saxons, and Poles. Peculiarly tenacious of their idolatry, venerating, like the ancient Egyptians, their priests more than their kings<sup>17</sup>; differing with each other in their idols, mythology, and worship<sup>18</sup>, but united in an implacable hatred of Christianity; they eagerly plunged into warfare with their converted neighbours<sup>19</sup>. The extermination which they laboured to deal around, was retorted upon themselves. Their territories were gradually curtailed; and a large portion of the

<sup>16</sup> Loccenius Hist. Suec. p. 76.

<sup>17</sup> Helmoldus, pp. 31. 90. They exacted tribute for their temple from the nations they conquered, and sent to it all the silver and gold which they took. Ib. p. 31.

<sup>18</sup> Aldenberg worshipped Prove, but without an image; the Polabi, Siwa; and the Obotriti, Radigast; who had all priests and a complicated worship. The people of Rugen had Zuantewith, whose oracles were much

venerated. They dreaded an evil being, whom they called Zeerneboch, or the black deity. Helmoldus, 43, 44.—At Pleinen, the idol was Podaga. They made some of their deities with two, three, or more heads. But they admitted one Supreme Being, who attended only to heaven, and thought that their earthly deities, to whom they consecrated groves, were his offspring. Ib. 68.

<sup>19</sup> Helmoldus, p. 44.

the country, from their own desolations, and the retaliations that followed, became a desert. To replenish these with a better population, large emigrations were invited from the Batavian and Flemish provinces. The new settlers built many cities, founded many churches, and rose to wealth and consequence with a rapidity that surprised their contemporaries. Saxony and other parts of Germany added their colonists, who also raised towns and cities in the desolate tracts<sup>20</sup>. The zeal of the German clergy assisted to people and civilize these districts. One archbishop re-established three sees, at Mecklenburg, Raciburg, and Oldenburg, which the Slavi had destroyed, and which for eighty-four years had remained uninhabited<sup>21</sup>.

The predatory habits of the rest of the Slavi were coerced; and in the thirteenth century, German nobility are seen arising in these districts, whose titles or sovereignties we recognize in modern days<sup>22</sup>. Lübeck, for a long time the only spot amid the Slavi where Christianity could find an asylum, though often attacked, and sometimes burnt, yet arose with new splendor from its ashes. It became gradually an emporium of the Baltic, and an independent republic. Merchants emigrated to it from the neighbouring cities; and the prince who last rebuilt it, made its laws, and sent messengers to all the cities and princes of the North, inviting their commercial intercourse, and promising safety and friendship<sup>23</sup>.

In the twelfth century the Oder was the western boundary Poland.  
of

<sup>20</sup> Helmoldus informs us of these curious facts, pp. 74 & 92. A colony of the Frisians is mentioned, p. 51.

<sup>21</sup> Chron. Slav. incert. Aust. p. 283.

<sup>22</sup> The partition of the territories of Henry the Lion, the great but unfortunate duke of Saxony, multiplied the noble proprietors in these parts. He married the daughter of

our Henry II. with whom he was obliged to take refuge in 1184. His youngest son, William, was born in England, from whom the present illustrious house of Brunswick is descended. Pütter's Germanic Empire, vol. 1. pp. 207—219.

<sup>23</sup> Helmold. pp. 30. 47. 58. 60, 61. 72. It was made a free imperial city 1182.

of Poland; and the approach to this river, out of Germany, was then thought to be impracticable, from the vast forests that lay near it, and which had long limited and deterred the progress of the German emperors. Forests also separated it from Bohemia, and marked its frontier towards Hungary<sup>24</sup>. But its population was kept in barbarism by this protecting seclusion. Predatory excursions by land, and piracy on the ocean, were their principal habits; and, with such pursuits, it was not unnatural that they should be thought deficient in fidelity to their princes, and in kindness to their relations. Their climate, cold and ungenial from wood and marsh, did not reward their unskilful agriculture; and in some parts, to live by hunting was preferred to the domestic labours of husbandry<sup>25</sup>. Christianity had obtained a footing in the country, with bishops and a clergy; but the Christianity and the clergy, of all nations in their barbarous state, are but the means of good struggling with a general mass of evil, and long partaking of its mischiefs. In the middle of the twelfth century, the real improvement of Poland was begun by a military enterprise, which connected it with the German empire. Frederick Barbarossa, the most able of the continental sovereigns, in 1157, was incited to attack it. He led the German forces to the forests so long believed to be impenetrable; he passed the Oder, where the passage had been thought an impossible achievement; he terrified by his progress not only the Poles, but also the Prussians, Pomeranians, and Russians, whom they had called to their assistance; and, notwithstanding they destroyed their own towns and defences as they retired, with the hope of checking his progress, he penetrated to Posnan, and laid waste the country on his part, till its duke, Boleslaus,

<sup>24</sup> Otto Frisien. Chron. p. 151. Radevic. makes the Vistula the eastern boundary of Poland, and Russia its northern.

<sup>25</sup> Radev. 477.



Bóleslaus, submitted and solicited peace; after granting which, Frederic withdrew<sup>26</sup>. Poland was often engaged in wars with the Prussians, and in the thirteenth century was severely harassed by the great Tartar irruption on the eastern frontier of Europe. It lost the command of Pomerania; and its province of Silesia, in the beginning of the fourteenth century, became united to Bohemia. But, from its territorial extent, its augmented population, and the activity and spirit of union among its inhabitants, it became so internally strong, that its sovereign, Casimir the Great, who acceded in 1333, conquered all Russia, and annexed it to Poland, imparting to it the same laws and liberties. He equally benefited his own country, by introducing into it the laws and constitutions of Magdeburg<sup>27</sup>. Thus as any one nation made advances in civilization, they were gradually communicated to its neighbours, and the general level of society was kept every where rising.

The Russian population had begun to form itself into a distinct Russia. and separate nation on the western boundary of its present empire. From the White Sea and the Lake of Ladoga to the Dnieper, and along the course of that river to its discharge into the Black Sea, the principal seats of the Russian nation appear to have been first established; the commercial Novgorod, its predominating city in the north, and Kiow the residence of its superior chief, and therefore its metropolis, in the south. Occasional intercourse of marriage, negociations, war, religion, and trade, scattered some gleams of Grecian civilization amid its rude tribes<sup>28</sup>, who gradually became connected and formed into a nation, though perhaps not all originating from the same source. But as Poland and Hungary had become united into nations and kingdoms, and even Bulgaria

<sup>26</sup> Radev. 478.

<sup>27</sup> Puffendorf Introd. c. 10.

<sup>28</sup> Their Vladimir the Great in 1015 obtained architects and workmen from Greece,

who built several churches and palaces, to the great displeasure of the old Russians, who beheld with horror the introduction of strange arts. *L'Evesque Hist. Russ.* p. 162.

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Bulgaria had attained this distinction, their confines and superior civilization established a line of demarcation, which, by limiting the Russian Slavi on the west, kept them distinct on this frontier, and made it their interest to confederate for safety and successful war. The distinction produced by the improvement of their western neighbours, their own progress effected on the north and east. The Lithuanians were more barbarous than the Russians; and the Turks or Tartars, besides a similar inferiority, were also kept distinct by their Paganism and Mohamedanism. Necessary confederations to repel these various neighbours, who often attacked them, led the scattered Russian tribes into the feelings, customs and relations, of a common nation. The adoption of Christianity, and of a clergy radiating from one ecclesiastical centre, and subordinate to one head<sup>29</sup>, increased the spirit and habits of national union; and though the frequent division of their population, under different chiefs, tended to sever their relationship, and to make them diverge into separate kingdoms, yet these were so often reduced, by the ambition and talents of some of their princes, into one monarchy, that their national unity was never broken. The monarch frequently endangered it, by dividing his dominions among his children at his death, or giving them large grants of territory during his life<sup>30</sup>. These subdivisions of power, and the dissensions they produced, kept the nation feeble as to external war; but these quarrels tended to scatter their population  
over

<sup>29</sup> The great influence of the clergy in Russia may be dated from the edict attributed to Vladimir, though probably somewhat later, which puts under their legal jurisdiction almost all the civil and criminal transactions of life—a provision as useful to a barbarous, as injurious to an improved age. See it described by L'Evesque, 164—168.

<sup>30</sup> L'Evesque justly remarks, “Thus Russia became divided among a crowd of little sovereignties, of which many were but vil-lages; and the chiefs were not mere lords, as in the rest of Europe, but princes of the blood of Rurik.” p. 163.



over a larger surface. Their inferiority to their neighbours in national strength, allowed those states to grow up without disturbance from Russian conquests; for if Russia had continued the progress which Jaroslaf, who died in 1054, had begun, neither Poland, Sweden, Greece, Hungary, nor Germany, might have continued independent states, nor have benefited the world, as each has done, by its own peculiar improvements. Russia, twice attempted in the middle ages by the Popes<sup>31</sup>, might have sunk into the dominion of the papal hierarchy, and have never attained that originality of character, institutions, and political position, in which we now behold her with admiration at her progress, and a friendly hope of its beneficial acceleration. Her chief struggles in the twelfth century were against the Polovtsi, literally the hunters, a Tartar nation living between the Don and the Jaik, and perpetually depredating, but who were at last subdued. The Poles and Hungarians frequently bickered with her, and her own princes were often in civil conflicts. But one of her princes, about 1150, gave her the important improvement of building several cities, to which he invited settlers from Hungary, Bulgaria, and other places, who greatly increased the population and resources of the country<sup>32</sup>. Among these he began the foundation of the celebrated Moskow, at first a pleasant mansion, near which a city began under his auspices to arise<sup>33</sup>. The next sovereign, discerning the inconveniencies of Kiow for the chief city of Russia, made Volodimir his capital, which long remained

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<sup>31</sup> By Gregory VII. in 1075; and by Urban II. in 1093. L'Evesque, pp. 213. 212.

<sup>32</sup> This was Georges, or Joury I. who reigned, with some vicissitudes, from 1149 to 1157.

<sup>33</sup> Being affronted by a bojar, who was residing at this spot, the Russian sovereign

confiscated his property, and, struck by the beauty of his hamlet, where two streams fell into the Moskva, he surrounded it with a rampart of wood, and peopled it with inhabitants from Volodimir and some neighbouring villages. Such was the casual origin of Moskow. L'Evesque, 340.



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remained so<sup>34</sup>. But the country continued to be weakened as a nation, by the numerous rival sovereignties which divided and exhausted it, till 1223, when the great invasion of the Mongol Tartars, who, under Gengiz Khan, rolled like a torrent from China into Europe, added Russia to the number of their conquests. The line of its ancient dynasties was subdued. Its princes became subordinate and tributary to the succeeding khan of the Tartars. His will was the general law; his voice decided their contests. Their national spirit was broken, and their national predominance destroyed<sup>35</sup>. Some cities confederated to emancipate themselves from the Tartar yoke, and succeeded; but the rest of the country continued in the servitude, increasing in population from the Tartar tribes<sup>36</sup>, and deriving some mental benefit from their predominance, for the Mongol Tartars had letters, some arts, and a spirit of religious toleration that might have instructed the whole Christian world<sup>37</sup>. Perhaps their greatest use was the abolition of the petty sovereignties that were distracting Russia, and preventing it from becoming one compacted and improving nation.

German  
Empire.

As the twelfth century began, the disturbed reign of Henry IV. was drawing to its close. Almost shaken from his throne by the revolting princes of the empire, and by popes, struggling for useful though ambitious projects, he surmounted their opposition, to meet in his latter days the more afflicting hostilities of his son, and died in 1106, having witnessed the repeated desolation of the  
finest

<sup>34</sup> On the decline of Kiow, which Adam of Bremen had remarked for its emulation of Constantinople (*Hist. Eccl.* p. 24.) see L'Evesque, 343—346.

<sup>35</sup> In this manner the principality of Kiow alone lost 60,000 of its subjects. L'Evesque, vol. 2. p. 26.

<sup>36</sup> The Tartar princes built several cities in Russia. *ib.* 78.

<sup>37</sup> The respectful treatment of the Khan

of the Tartars, in 1313, to the Russian metropolitan; and the important privileges which he granted or confirmed to the Russian clergy, whose prayer, though a Mohamedan, he solicited; are stated from Russian documents by L'Evesque, vol. 2. pp. 137—139. Mr. Tooke's publications on Russia present the English reader with an elaborate collection of historical and geographical information.

## CHAP.

## I.

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finest parts of Germany, and the moral and political commotions into which the intestine warfares had thrown its conflicting population. In the insolence of his youth he had expressed his regret, that no one seemed disposed to make him exercise his strength; and he imputed the tranquillity of his great subjects to their sloth and sensuality<sup>38</sup>. He lived to experience the evils of their turbulent activity. Their struggles effected the important revolution, of making all the German dignities hereditary rights. The dukes, margraves and counts, were no longer governors dependent upon the crown, and transferrable by its bounty or caprice; their titles and territorial property became permanent possessions, and descended to their families in regular inheritance<sup>39</sup>. This innovation reduced the imperial crown to a splendid nominal honour, circumscribed its ambition, and filled Germany with independent states. To provide checks to the great nobility, the emperors pursued the policy of establishing free cities in every part; and thus the growth of an original population was secured, nursed in moderated liberty, and gradually improved by every new accession of civilization which their own ingenuity and continual intercourse with their neighbours could obtain.

The superior talents of Henry V. made his reign more prosperous than his father's. The continuance of the papal attacks on their emperors, roused the pride and disturbed the comforts of the German nobility<sup>40</sup>. Henry availed himself of their dissatisfaction, to invade Italy with 30,000 knights, whose encampments blazed in the darkness of midnight with a flaming torch on every tent.

He

<sup>38</sup> Otto Fris. de Gest. Fred. c. 4. p. 408.

<sup>39</sup> Pütter Germ. Emp. l. 2. c. 9. p. 184—198.

"Instead of the ancient division of Germany into cantons (gau) there appeared in the twelfth century an infinite number of hereditary counties and lordships; and the

family names of the possessors of them, which were derived from the ancient residences, soon became equally hereditary." lb. p. 187.

<sup>40</sup> Otto Fris. c. 1. p. 407.



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He boldly advanced to Rome, and seized the person of the Pope, notwithstanding the resistance of the citizens<sup>41</sup>. But he was at last obliged to yield the investiture of the spiritualities of the German bishops, by the ring and crosier, to the Pope<sup>42</sup>, reserving to the throne the right of giving them their temporal fiefs, by the delivery of a sceptre. He married the daughter of our English sovereign Henry I. whom he left a widow in 1125, and whose struggles with Stephen have been already recorded<sup>43</sup>. He multiplied the freemen of Germany, by enfranchising all those in the servile state in cities, who were artisans; and he raised them to the rank of citizens<sup>44</sup>; an important exertion of political wisdom and benevolent power.

The reign of Lotharius II. his successor, made the empire for ten years the scene of conflict with the duke of Suabia. He lost an army in an invasion of Bohemia; and so many Saxons were destroyed in its forests, on the disaster, that a national animosity became fixed between Saxony and Bohemia<sup>45</sup>. The duke of Poland did him homage for Pomerania and Rugen; and he compelled the king of Denmark, in token of his feudal subjection, to carry the sword under his crown<sup>46</sup>. His campaign in Italy obtained a greater command of Apulia and Campania, than any preceding emperor had enjoyed<sup>47</sup>.

The conversion of Germany into an elective empire had been one of the results of its interior conflicts, and of the papal interference.

<sup>41</sup> Otto Fris. Chron. l. 7. p. 147.

<sup>42</sup> Pütter, l. 2. c. 8. p. 172.—The emperors never regained this prerogative. Ib.

<sup>43</sup> Hist. Eng. vol. i. pp. 178—182.

<sup>44</sup> Butler's Revol. Germ. Empire, p. 47. 1st ed.

<sup>45</sup> Otto de Gest. c. 21. p. 418.

<sup>46</sup> Otto Chron. p. 149.

<sup>47</sup> He expelled Roger from the dutchy of these provinces, and gave it Reginald: this

produced a quarrel with the Pope, who claimed its feudal sovereignty. The grant was usually made by presenting a banner to the selected chieftain. To appease the Pope on this occasion, it was agreed that he and the Emperor should both have their hands on the banner when it was given to Reginald. Otto Chron. p. 151.



ference. This right of election by the German princes<sup>48</sup> had been exerted in the appointment of Lotharius. It was repeated on the elevation of Conrade III. in 1139, whose intercourse with the Grecian emperor must have benefited the Germanic Continent<sup>49</sup>.

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In 1152 he was succeeded in the empire by Frederic Barbarossa; a prince, whose personal talents, peculiar ambition, distant expeditions, and active reign, diverted the restlessness of his countrymen from the desolations of domestic depredation, established an intimate connexion between the German and Italian mind; to their mutual benefit, and placed the Pope and the Emperor in political collisions, which were auspicious to the religious liberties of the empire<sup>50</sup>. After his death, on his crusade in Cilicia in 1191, his son, Henry VI. obtained the empire. This was the sovereign who detained our Richard Cœur de Lion in captivity, who married the heiress of Sicily, and who three times assailed Italy with an overwhelming force, and even meditated the conquest of Greece<sup>51</sup>. His death, in 1197, released the Pope and the Peninsula from an enemy, whose power was increased by his military talents; and the war of twelve years which followed, for the German sovereignty, gave Italy an interval of independence and prosperity. Its cities sent their golden keys and respectful presents to Otho IV. the successful competitor, who was crowned at Rome in 1209. His reign was distinguished by his great defeat in Flanders, which preserved the independence of France<sup>52</sup>; and he was succeeded in 1220, by Frederic II. whose inheritance of Sicily connected Germany with that interesting island at the time when

<sup>48</sup> See Pütter, c. 10. p. 199—202.

<sup>49</sup> See their letters and intercourse, in Otto de gestis Fred. p. 419.

<sup>50</sup> On this important reign, the original contemporary accounts of Otto Frisingensis, Otto S. Blas, and Radevicus, may be seen in the German. Histor. Urtisii 1585.

<sup>51</sup> Otto S. Bl. p. 222.

<sup>52</sup> The monk of Padua ascribes this war to a sportive promise or wager of the king of France, to give the city of Paris to Otho if he ever got the imperial crown. Otho becoming Emperor, claimed the performance by arms. Monac. Pad. Chron. p. 582.

when the vernacular poetry of Italy was first receiving its birth. He confirmed the ecclesiastical and secular states in their territorial prerogatives<sup>53</sup>. His contests for the Italian sovereignty were as arduous as those of his first namesake. By 1242, he had acquired almost the whole of Italy, and he strove by every means to depress the papal power, to divest it of its temporal possessions, and to diminish the pride of the clergy<sup>54</sup>. The active Pope at last procured another emperor to be elected in opposition to him. Their personal contest, and the German domination of Italy, ceased by the death of Frederic in 1250. A long vacancy and many competitions ensued, for the imperial crown<sup>55</sup>; till the house of Hapsburg, obtaining it in 1273, began a new and wise system of internal and external policy, abandoning Italy and foreign war<sup>56</sup>.

The fourteenth century exhibited many wasteful struggles for the empire. Charles, the king of Bohemia, who attained it, and who died in 1378, conceded to France the little kingdom of Arles, annexed Silesia to Bohemia, increased the privileges of the German cities, to counterbalance the power of the great princes; and caused the famous Golden Bull to be compiled, which, settling the rules for the election of succeeding emperors, prevented their future dissensions on this interesting subject. Germany had now fully

<sup>53</sup> Pütter, c. 12. p. 233.

<sup>54</sup> This is the language of the Monk of Padua, p. 590; and the same objects, about the same period, seem to have influenced also the governments of France and England.

<sup>55</sup> In 1247 the count of Holland was chosen Emperor; and the Magnum Chronicon Bel-gicum has preserved a detailed account of the ceremony of his imperial coronation, pp. 243—246. If emperors of Germany have been ambitious of universal dominion, can we be surprised at it, when we find that one part of the ceremony was, "Then the duke of

Bavaria, the count of the palace or cup-bearer, gave him a golden globe, saying, 'Take this spherical globe, and *subdue all nations* of the earth to the Roman Empire, that you may be called the glorious Augustus.'" Mag. Chron. Belg. 245.

<sup>56</sup> Though often invited to Italy he abstained from the enterprise, giving the answer of the Fox—"The footsteps deter me." He was the first that introduced the use of the German tongue in all public courts and private transactions, instead of the Latin. Puffend. Introd. c. 8.



fully acquired its singular constitution<sup>57</sup>; and, rapidly improving in its internal culture and political strength<sup>58</sup>, became, in the following centuries, of the greatest importance to the progress of the general civilization of Europe. Separated from Italy, after an active intercourse with that improved peninsula, it was thrown back upon its own native peculiarities and resources; and it grew up from these into an original character of mind and morals, which has even excited the panegyric of the critical and cynical Machiavel<sup>59</sup>. His opinion is the more interesting, because, in ascribing their merit to their political seclusion<sup>60</sup>, he contributes to illustrate one of the great processes of national melioration. When intercourse with a more civilized state can benefit a ruder one, it is impelled into incidents that establish a temporary communication. Thus the Germans were carried by ambitious emperors into Italy and Sicily, and an age of vernacular poetry and mental cultivation was

<sup>57</sup> Although taken as a whole it was one Empire, yet it was rather a compound body of states, the individual members of which formed each of them particular states, independent, but subordinate as parts to the whole, and connected by one common head. There were also towns and cities which were subject to none of the princes or states, but acknowledged the Emperor alone as their territorial lord. Pütter, c. 12. p. 239.

<sup>58</sup> Bebelius, who addressed his panegyric on Germany to Maximilian, in 1501, maintains, that though Tacitus, Seneca, and others, had described Germany as barbarous, sterile, gloomy, and uncultivated, yet in his day it had become so full of cities, castles and mansions; so fertile, so agricultural; so connected by roads, population, and intercourse, that it might be justly said that Greece had emigrated to Germany. Hist. Germ. Var. Basle, t. 1. p. 275. His rhetorical image may be hyperbolical, but his

description shews the universal improvement of Germany.

<sup>59</sup> "Germany is the place, of the whole world, where the footsteps of the old Roman virtue and fidelity are conspicuous, and that fidelity is the reason why so many cities live happily in liberty; for they are so careful and studious of their laws, that this circumstance preserves them from servitude, and from being over-run by their enemies." Machiav. Disc. c. 52. p. 324. Engl. ed.

<sup>60</sup> "Integrity and justice are no where to be found but in Germany; and this arises from their having little or no commerce with their neighbours; neither trading into foreign parts, nor admitting foreigners among them. Hence they prevent a communication of the corrupt manners of the French, Spaniards, and Italians, who are vicious enough to debauch the whole world." Machiav. ib. p. 325.



was the consequence<sup>61</sup>. When the continuance of the connexion would have been pernicious, it was terminated. Germany lost the sovereignty of Italy, and was driven back into its own soil, to grow up there with its own hardy virtues, and into a native character and integrity peculiarly its own. One of the greatest obstacles to improvement in Germany, was its right of private wars; but the barbarous custom was at length abolished by law in the year 1495<sup>62</sup>.

The Hanse  
Towns.

The commercial phenomenon of the middle ages, was the Hanse confederation. Its origin is obscure. But the piratical habits of the North, accustoming its various peoples to bold and distant navigation, produced early a spirit of commerce on the Baltic, which rapidly superseded the habits of the sea-kings and vikings<sup>63</sup>. Birca in Sweden, even in the ninth century, was celebrated for its traffic. Bergen in Norway, Novgorod and Kiow in Russia, and the pagan republic of Jomsberg<sup>64</sup>, besides other towns on the Baltic, were also distinguished. When Jomsberg fell, Lübeck rapidly emerged into commercial activity and wealth. The habit spread. Flanders, long the object of the Northman desolations, became also one of the seats of European commerce. The free cities

<sup>61</sup> "Soon after this, the most splendid period of Teutonic poetry and romance commenced. For the space of a century and a half, beginning about the middle of the twelfth, and ending with the reign of Rudolph of Hapsburg, emperors, kings, princes, nobles, monks and menial minstrels, vied with each other in producing and translating lays of love, romances, fabliaux, chronicles, fables and sacred legends. The names and works of above three hundred minstrels of that period have been preserved." *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities*, p. 7. ed. Edinb. 1814.

<sup>62</sup> By a clause in the Landfriede, an edict

made by Fred. I. to every one was reserved the right of doing justice to himself by force, provided he gave three days notice to his adversary, and declared himself his enemy. Pütter, c. 10. p. 206.—"It may be safely asserted, that in the fourteenth and following century, there was scarcely a habitable tract of land, of a few square miles, to be found, which was not almost incessantly involved in troubles, and distracted by the horrors of private war." *Ib.* l. 3. c. 3. p. 294.

<sup>63</sup> See *Hist. Anglo-Sax.* vol. ii. l. 8. c. 11.

<sup>64</sup> See *Hist. Engl.* vol. i. p. 27.

cities of Italy imbibed the same spirit; Lucca, Florence, Pisa, Genoa, and Venice, spread the Mediterranean with their vessels; and many of them had factors, settlements, warehouses and shops, in England<sup>65</sup>. In the first part of the thirteenth century, some or most of these trading towns; especially those between the Bay of Biscay and the Arctic Circle, united into a confederation for mutual defence, and for the promotion, perhaps for the monopoly, of their commercial pursuits, under the name of the Hanse Towns<sup>66</sup>. In the time of Waldemar III. who died in 1375, the Hanse towns, who combined against him, amounted to seventy-seven in number<sup>67</sup>. They exercised a judicial superintendence over the conduct of their members, and punished them by a species of commercial excommunication<sup>68</sup>. They formed fleets, supported wars, and attempted invasions when provoked<sup>69</sup>. After the fifteenth century they rapidly declined, and dwindled to three towns, Lübeck, Bremen, and Hamburg<sup>70</sup>.

The reign of Philip Augustus, who died in 1223, nearly doubled the dominions of the French crown, by wresting Normandy, Touraine, Anjou, and Maine, from our pusillanimous John. The power of France, from this aggrandizement, was severely felt by Germany at the celebrated battle of Bövines, in which he defeated the emperor Otho and his allies<sup>71</sup>, and established

<sup>65</sup> See our subsequent chapter on Commerce.

<sup>66</sup> The word Hansa signifies, in the ancient German, a number of persons associated by compact. Schilt. Thes. p. 423.

<sup>67</sup> Pontanus, in his Hist. Denm. p. 494. enumerates them, and gives the rhiming witticism of the Danish king upon them.

<sup>68</sup> Thus, because the town of Brunswick, one of their union, had supported a popular tumult, they declared it cut off from their Hanse. Its merchants were not suffered to

trade in their emporiums, and were interdicted from the use and community of their privileges for eight years. Krantz Wandalia, pp. 207. 258.

<sup>69</sup> Their four principal emporia were, London, Bruges, Bergen, and Novogrod. Krantz ib.

<sup>70</sup> Pütter, p. 257.

<sup>71</sup> Rigordus describes with pompous elation the French rejoicings on this victory—the popular songs, the ecclesiastical chants, the churches hung with ornaments both inside and



established the French predominance in Flanders. Like other princes in Europe at this period, he favoured the growth of free cities in his kingdom, to give the crown a balance of strength against the vassal population of the nobility.

His son Louis VIII. had been disappointed of the English crown by the coronation of Henry III.;<sup>72</sup> and the aids he furnished to the disgraceful attack on the Albigenses, prevented him in his resentment from dispossessing England of Gascony and Bourdeaux<sup>73</sup>.

The talents of St. Louis, who succeeded in 1226, were principally occupied by crusades in Egypt and at Tunis, as personally calamitous to the sovereign, who was taken prisoner in his first expedition, and perished from the plague in his last, as to his nation, whom they harassed and exhausted<sup>74</sup>. He benefited France by laws and civil institutions, which increased its interior prosperity and relative strength; and was formed to have greatly improved its moral character, if he had remained in his own country, quietly displaying in a peaceful life his wisdom, piety, and useful virtues<sup>75</sup>. In his reign a new direction was given to the French mind and politics, by the invitation of his brother Charles of Anjou into Italy. In the successful expeditions of this prince, he destroyed his German competitors with much personal cruelty, and obtained the kingdom of Naples and Sicily<sup>76</sup>. The same prince

and out, the houses covered with rich curtains and embroidered silks, and the streets strewed with plants and boughs of trees, to gratulate the king's triumphal entry. p. 223.

<sup>72</sup> Hist. England, vol. i. p. 358.

<sup>73</sup> Henault. Chron. Abr.

<sup>74</sup> St Louis had an admiring and affectionate biographer in his friend Joinville, whose work is one of the most interesting remains of the early French literature.

<sup>75</sup> His apology may be rested on the feelings of the age; for we find the troubadour Pierre Vidal inveighing against St Louis's grandfather, because, instead of making a crusade and aiding the holy sepulchre, he passed his life "in a vile traffick, of which the French are ashamed." Palaye Troub. vol. 2. p. 281.

<sup>76</sup> On the actions of Charles D'Anjou, Sismondi has collected a copious account in his



prince occasioned the union of Provence with the French crown, by marrying the daughter of its last count<sup>77</sup>. CHAP.  
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Philip III. succeeding St. Louis in 1270, had wars with the king of Castile, and the feudal counts in Languedoc and Guienne. His victories over the latter increased the internal consolidation of the French power<sup>78</sup>. ELEVENTH  
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The reign of Philip IV. or the Fair, from 1285 to 1314, was important for his contests with Edward I. for Flanders, and for his struggles with Pope Boniface, who attempted, as in England, to keep the clergy exempt from lay-taxation, that their revenues might be more immediately applicable to the papal services. As the veneration for St. Peter's chair began now to be diminishing through Europe, from the unholy passions that often filled it, this dispute gave a decisive check to the progress of the papal authority in France. The right of appeal from its infallibility to the next general council was asserted, and a foundation was laid for the liberties of the Gallican church<sup>79</sup>.

The short reigns of the three next princes<sup>80</sup> were followed by that of Philip VI. or de Valois, whose resistance to Edward III. produced the chief events of that illustrious reign. His union of Dauphiny and Montpellier with the French crown, augmented the concentration

his *Histoire des Rep. Ital.* vol. 3. p. 336—492. The execution of Consadine was unknighly and inhuman. The Sicilian Vespers was a horrible retaliation of his severities.

<sup>77</sup> The troubadour Peguilain laments this incorporation of Provence, but shews the utility of the event. "Instead of a brave seigneur, they will have a sire (a king). They will build neither cities nor fortresses. Subjugated by the French, they will not dare to carry again either lance or shield." 2 Palaye, p. 239. Thus the enlargement of kingdoms absorbed local warfare.

<sup>78</sup> The monk Guil. de Nangis, who wrote

the *Gesta of St. Louis*, continues his narrative to the end of Philip's reign. *Hist. Franc.* pp. 482—504. ed. Franc. 1596.

<sup>79</sup> Philip arrested the Pope's legate, and afterwards caused the Pope himself to be taken prisoner. He abolished the order of Knights Templars. To his reign have been referred the admission of the third estate into the States General, and the fixed establishment of the French juridical parliaments. *Henault Chron. Abr.*

<sup>80</sup> Louis X. or Hutin, 1314—1316.  
Philip V. or The Long, 1316—1322.  
Charles IV. or The Fair, 1322—1328.

concentration of the national power; and, though this was shaken by the captivity of his successor, John, at the battle of Poitiers, and by the factions of the yet insubordinate great, which ensued, yet Charles V. who acceded in 1364, notwithstanding the talents of the Black Prince, recovered all the conquered provinces, added others, and displayed and fostered that literary taste and spirit in the French people, which have never since abandoned them<sup>81</sup>.

His successor Charles VI. who began his reign in 1380, a boy of twelve years, made his future days remarkable by a powerful invasion of Italy—an ambitious enterprise of fleeting glory, which has since become a favourite dream of French policy, attractive, like many prospects in the distant view, but yielding only disappointment and evil on the near approach.

Italy.

The rivalship of the cities that had arisen in the north of Italy, and especially of Milan and Pavia, the principal, or the most ambitious of all, marked the first part of the twelfth century<sup>82</sup>. The attempts of Milan to increase her power, and the dissensions of the rest, were suspended by the approach of an invasion, which they had themselves excited. This was the expedition of Frederic Barbarossa, the Emperor of Germany, directed first against Milan, whose unjust attack on Lodi had urged the citizens of that town to appear at the German diet, and solicit the aid of Frederic. The invitation was too grateful to be disregarded. Meditating the annexation of Italy to his imperial crown, he had already received with

<sup>81</sup> The Memoires of Christine de Pisan, who began to write in 1399 at the age of 35, contain an interesting account of Charles V. She notices his attainments, and love of literature and the arts, and the translations from the Greek and Latin classics which he ordered. Being one day reproached for favouring the learned Clerks, he answered, "When they have knowledge, they cannot be too much honoured; and while knowledge

is honoured, this kingdom will prosper, but will perish when that ceases." Mem. Christ. de Pisan, p. 204.

<sup>82</sup> Milan was then surrounded by seven republics, Como, Novarre, Pavia, Lodi, Cremona, Crema, Bergamo. Of these it destroyed Lodi in 1111, and subdued Crema and Como. Sismond. Hist. Ital. vol. 2. pp. 5—20.



with satisfaction the solicitations of the Pope, to coerce the fractious citizens of Rome, and the intreaties of the Apulian barons to aid them against the king of Sicily<sup>83</sup>. The additional complaint of Pavia and Cremona, against the encroachments of the Milanese, gave him specious pretexts to spread his forces over every part of Italy, with the certainty of being seconded, in the chief scenes of his warfare, by an important part of the native population.

The dominion of the German emperors over Italy, before the twelfth century, was neither perpetual nor complete. When the emperor intended to visit Italy, officers went before him to collect the customary tributes; and as soon as he entered it, all other dignities were suspended<sup>84</sup>. His sovereignty was then both acknowledged and felt. When he withdrew to Germany, the native princes and jurisdictions resumed their powers, and the government of the distant emperor was feeble and disputed.

It had been the policy of Otho the Great, the first German emperor who had acquired the command of Italy, to encourage the prosperity of the cities of Italy. He gave them the important privilege of possessing a municipal government chosen and administered by themselves<sup>85</sup>; the first step towards their being free states, and some of them republics. Gradually advancing in strength, and animated with reviving recollections of their ancient history, they endeavoured to imitate the institutions of Rome when it was a republic, and also to possess a native prince. The eleventh century was the æra of many struggles to throw off the yoke of a foreign sovereign, and to have a king of their own choice and country. The power exerted by the popes against the emperors, favoured

<sup>83</sup> Sismondi, 48—53; and see Otto's remarks, "de diversis bellis urbium Italiæ," in his Chron. l. 7. p. 145.

<sup>84</sup> Otto de Gest. Fred. c. 12. p. 454.

<sup>85</sup> An intelligent review of the state of

Italy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, is exhibited in Ginguene's *Histoire Littéraire d'Italie*, vol. 1. p. 101—107, and 142—145. Sismondi's work presents the full detail.



favoured the rising independence of the cities, and the wisdom of their domestic legislation accelerated their liberties. "They affect liberty so much," says a writer of the twelfth century <sup>86</sup>, "that they prefer consuls to riches. They have three orders of society, chiefs, knights, and common people. To repress pride, their consuls are chosen from all these orders promiscuously; and to preclude ambition, the election is made annual. To provide a constant and effective military force, they admit to their honours of knighthood and dignity the youth of inferior condition; even the artificers of despised and mechanical arts, whom other nations exclude like a pestilence from the more reputable and liberal studies. Hence," says even this German, the kinsman of an emperor, "hence they excel, in wealth and power, all the other cities of the world."

Such was Italy in 1154, when Frederic Barbarossa descended into Italy to effectuate its subjection, and to receive the imperial crown from the Pope. His enterprise was popular in Germany, and he came repeatedly into Italy with a force that seemed to be overwhelming. Having established his fiscal system, he declared the appointment of the magistracy of the cities to be in himself, but with the assent of the people <sup>87</sup>. Milan withstood, with the courage of ancient Rome, the first efforts of his power; and maintained the unequal contest for eight years, with varying fortune, but with the most active bravery and heroic perseverance. The determination of Frederic was as inflexible as their own, and in 1162 his superior means of aggression prevailed. After a siege, endured by the citizens with that constancy in suffering with which human nature so often surprises us in defensive war, they were compelled by famine to surrender Milan to the imperial arms.

The

<sup>86</sup> Otto de Gest. Fred. p. 453. This author ends this work in 1156, three years before he died.

<sup>87</sup> Radevicus, l. 2. p. 509. This author, also a contemporary, continues the subject of Otto's work for a few years.

The implacable Frederic commanded all the inhabitants to leave the place, and nine days afterwards had it rased to the earth<sup>88</sup>.

The calamities of the Milanese having removed all danger from their ambition, awakened the rest of Italy to pity for their suffering, and to alarm at the conqueror's progress. In five years after the destruction of Milan, the principal cities in the North of Italy united into a patriotic league of mutual defence, called the League of Lombardy<sup>89</sup>, generously re-built Milan; and with this well-arranged confederation, aspired to destroy the German monarchy of Italy, which Frederic thought he had so surely established<sup>90</sup>. For fifteen years he contended for his ambitious gratification, till at the end of this time, a ruinous defeat at Lignano terminated all the hopes for which he had led seven overpowering armies into Italy, and endured a loss of half a million of men<sup>91</sup>. The peace of Constance in 1183 gave the Lombard republics an authorized and legal existence, and Italy was once more made independent of Germany.

Thirty years had this great conflict lasted between the Italian cities and the imperial crown. This long continuance had roused the population of Italy, and especially of Lombardy, into great intellectual activity. This general excitement produced civil dissensions. The nobles in each district, who had led their fellow-citizens in their warfare, aspired to the superior honour of their little states. The people became jealous of their chiefs. In some parts, factions divided the populace; in others, petty tyrants prevailed;

<sup>88</sup> On this last unequal contest, in which Frederic attacked Milan with 100,000 men, see Sismondi, pp. 130—135.

<sup>89</sup> The Veronese began it by inviting the cities to meet in a diet, to concert the means of defending Italy. Deputies assembled, and contracted an alliance for twenty years, and engaged to defend each other against every

one who should attack their privileges. Sismondi, pp. 160, 161.

<sup>90</sup> The patriotic cities were, Venice, Verona, Vicenza, Padua, Trevisa, Ferrara, Brescia, Bergamo, Cremona, Milan, Lodi, Placentia, Parma, Modena, and Bologna.

<sup>91</sup> Sismondi, 222, 223.



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prevailed; and from the love of liberty among the many, and of power among the few, civil agitations almost every where raged at the close of the twelfth, and at the opening of the thirteenth century<sup>92</sup>.

But these social bickerings, and the struggles of the popes and emperors with their Guelphs and Ghibelline factions, only animated and employed the aristocracies and democracies of the Peninsula, and prepared them for greater exploits. The Venetians and Pisans obtained settlements at Constantinople, and engrossed the rich commerce of the East, which the enervated Grecians were incompetent either to value or to cultivate. The Latins attack on their illustrious, but feeble, city was powerfully aided by the Venetian fleets; and when, on its conquest in 1204, Baldwin the Count of Flanders was made its emperor, the Grecian provinces were partitioned chiefly among the Italian leaders; Thessalonica and Thessaly were erected into a monarchy, for the Marquis of Montserrat; Achaia was divided into several duchies and principalities; some provinces, and several islands, were assigned to the Venetians. The Genoese seized Modon and Coron on the Spartan coast, and the islands Crete and Corfu. But the Venetian senate, in 1207, granting permission to its citizens to arm at their own expense vessels of war, and to conquer for themselves the islands of the Archipelago and the cities on the Grecian coasts, a new ambition inflamed the minds of the Venetian merchants. Swarms of military adventurers crowded the neighbouring seas; the unwarlike Greeks yielded to their rapacious attacks; Venetian duchies were established on part of the Grecian continent and in several of the isles, and the Genoese were dispossessed of their acquisitions by the superior activity or force of the Venetian armaments. Gradually, Venice  
lost

<sup>92</sup> Sismondi, 247—257. The monk of Padua's Chronicle, from 1207 to 1270, presents a plain but striking picture of the state of Italy at this period.



lost her continental dignities, but she retained for four centuries the islands she had seized<sup>93</sup>.

CHAP.  
I.

ELEVENTH  
CENTURY  
TO THE  
FOURTEENTH

While the cities in the north of Italy were thus becoming illustrious in wealth, power and reputation, those of Tuscany, which had been hitherto quiescent and obscure, began to emerge also into emulation and consequence. A spirit of party agitated Florence for three and thirty years, accustomed the inhabitants to arms, and excited it to the ambition which urged it to its future conquests and celebrity<sup>94</sup>. The attack of Frederic II. compelled the Italian cities to renew the Lombard league. They preserved their independence, and continued their factions. But in the midst of this universal emulation and activity, their beautiful language became formed, and their varied genius was expanded, enriched and exercised. Sicilian rhymers began that vernacular poetry which superseded the Provençal<sup>95</sup>, and opened the road from which Dante darted with an eagle's flight, transcending all his contemporaries, and pouring out strains which still astonish and interest his cultivated posterity. Petrarch soon followed with rival fame, not only improving his own countrymen, but even exciting and assisting the genius of the early poets of England, who confess their obligation, and echo his praise. Modern painting began with Cimabue, who died in 1300; and never ceased improving, till Italy had enriched the world with its Raffaele, Michelagnolo, Titian, Corregio, Guido, and the Caraccis.

In Spain the Mohamedan power progressively declined. The competition had long been decided between Christianity and Mohamedanism, and the latter lost the empire of the world,

never

<sup>93</sup> Sismondi, 376—435.

<sup>94</sup> Machiavel remarks of Tuscany, that, though a small territory, it had three considerable republics, Florence, Sienna, and Lucca. "Their minds and laws shew a trange propensity to freedom, which pro-

ceeds from a scarcity of gentry in those parts." Disc. c. 52. p. 325.

<sup>95</sup> On this interesting subject and period, the reader will be gratified by Ginguene's observations and facts, vol. 1. pp. 336—358.

PART  
III.STATE OF  
EUROPE,  
FROM THE  
ELEVENTH  
CENTURY  
TO THE  
FOURTEENTH

never to recover it. The Emperors of Morocco, uniting their African population, endeavoured to renew the triumphs of the Crescent; but their efforts failed. The Christian kingdoms, superior in the mind and morals of their subjects, went on, enlarging their territories, and curtailing the precincts of Islamism; and as the fourteenth century closed, it was obvious that no long time could elapse, before the whole Peninsula would be subject to their sway. At this period, commerce, Christianity, literature, science, and increasing political freedom, were combining with continuing progress to raise modern Europe to every attainable superiority. England partook in full measure of all these blessings; and we proceed to pourtray, in authentic detail, the history of its advancement, which has never been inferior to that of any of the states of Europe, but which has most frequently preceded all.

# HISTORY

## OF

### E N G L A N D.

#### C H A P. II.

THE REIGN OF EDWARD THE FIRST.

1272—1307.

EDWARD had reached the middle period of life at the time of his accession. The mature age of thirty-four, and the varied activity and occasional adversity of his preceding years, had given a mellow tint to his character, which marked all his reign. His mind resembled the Conqueror's, in its solidity of judgment, military talents, vigour, decision, and irascibility. But, acceding to an undisputed throne, he had none of the jealousies which had so often alarmed William into error and injustice, and his vindictive temper was accompanied with a ready placability. He is stated to have been as easily disarmed by submission, as he was fierce and impatient, when counteracted or provoked<sup>1</sup>. But revenge often inflicts evils, which no repentance can compensate. It gives a prin-

CHAP.  
II.

<sup>1</sup> Walsingham gives an instance of this. Hawking one day on a river, he saw one of his earls not attending to a falcon that had just seized a duck among the willows: Edward, then prince, upbraided him for his neglect; and the noble tauntingly replied, that it was sufficient for him that the river parted them. Stung by the remark, the Prince plunged his horse immediately into the stream, though ignorant of the depth, and

having with difficulty reached the bank, pursued the earl with his drawn sword; till the nobleman, seeing escape hopeless, turned round his horse, threw off his hat, and, advancing to Edward with his neck stretched out, put himself on his mercy. The submissive posture disarmed the Prince; he sheathed his sword, and rode home friendly with the offender. Wals. Hist. Angl. p. 2.



a principle to our actions, and a spirit to our nature, that revive those darker features of the savage state, which cultivated reason is ever struggling to subdue. In Edward's conduct to the Welsh and Scotch, we see this baneful quality in full activity; and it has fixed those spots upon his bright character, which no partiality can remove.

He is described to have been a prince of elegant form, and majestic stature: so tall, that few of his people reached beyond his shoulders, his ample forehead and prominent chest, increased the dignity of his personal appearance. His arms were peculiarly agile in the use of the sword; and the length of his thighs gave him a firm seat on the most spirited horses, from which he could scarcely be shaken. The light yellow hair of his infancy became black, as he advanced to manhood. His left eye had the same singularity, of the oblique fall of the eyebrow, which had marked his father's countenance. His speech was hesitating, but occasionally eloquent<sup>2</sup>. His mind was resolute, ambitious, firm and courageous; yet tempered with that rare discretion, which never pursued objects beyond his power of attainment; which never applied insufficient means to important designs; and never enforced even a favourite project at the risk of his safety. Hence, when anxious to embark an army for Guienne, which his nobles declined to join, though he told one of them, who refused, that he should either go or be hanged; yet, when the haughty baron, repeating the king's oath, declared that he would neither go nor be hanged, Edward, with all his irascibility, paused and submitted: he saw 30 knights bannerets and 1500 others gathered round the menaced noble, and he wisely sacrificed his passion to his prudence<sup>3</sup>.

When

<sup>2</sup> Walsingham, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> W. Hemingford Chron. p. 112. Hearne ed. This author, a canon of Giseburn in York-

shire, died 1347. His life of Edward I. in Hearne's edition, is valuable for its perspicuous narrative and public documents.

When unoccupied by war, he was fond of the pleasures of the chase. To hunt stags was his favourite amusement; and his daring ardour was so great in the pursuit, that he ventured to pierce them with his sword, when they were seized, instead of the safer hunting spear. An incident in his youth gave a devotional impression to his mind, which never left it. Playing one day at chess with a knight in a chamber, he suddenly rose in the midst of the game from an unconscious impulse, and in the next moment an immense stone, from the ceiling, fell on the place where he had been sitting. He referred his protection to the Virgin at Walsingham, and believed himself ever afterwards to be under the protection of Heaven; a persuasion that fortified his courage, and may have contributed to increase the moral decorum of his life<sup>4</sup>.

His juvenile character at its first ebullition had begun to be turbulent. He patronized as part of his household, and had educated in his court, some of those depredatory bands whom the imperfect police of the country suffered to roam, like the Robinhood of our ballads, and who plundered even in his sight unchastised<sup>5</sup>. In favouring this kind of society, he was somewhat imitated by Henry V. But he soon emerged into pursuits more profitable to his character, and more consonant with his rank. He was delighted to try his great personal strength and dexterity in the exercises

<sup>4</sup> Wals. p. 2.—This impression was probably increased by the catastrophe of pope John XXI. who in the beginning of Edward's reign was crushed to death by the fall of the new apartments which he had built at Viterbo. *Ib.* p. 7. — In 1288, Edward had another escape: a flash of lightning passed between him and his queen, leaving them unhurt, but killing two ladies in the room. *Ib.* 14.

<sup>5</sup> Matthew Paris has transmitted to us this incident. Edward was then seventeen. "Rob-

bers and knightly plunderers, whom his court educated, scattering themselves far and wide, seized and carried away the horses, waggons, and goods, of the merchants." To give one instance, "When he visited the earl Richard at Wallingford, his family burst into the neighbouring priory, and, driving out the monks, seized their provisions, fuel and fodder, broke their doors and windows, and cudgelled their domestics." *Hist.* p. 937. These violences were done "ipso permissi." *Ib.*



exercises of the tournament. Hence, as soon as he was made a knight, he sailed over sea with his young companions, to prove their skill and prowess in some of the foreign courts<sup>6</sup>.

He distinguished himself so much for his successful chivalry, that he attracted the notice of the Provençal poets. In their encomiastic allusions and exciting compliments, we perceive the estimation which he had acquired among his contemporaries<sup>7</sup>. One of his last chivalric exertions before he became king, was at a court in Savoy, on his return to England. The count insisted on a trial of prowess with him. A tournament was proclaimed, and the opposed knights conflicted. In the heat of the struggle, the prince and the count became personal competitors. Throwing down his sword, the count, relying on his fancied superiority of strength, clasped Edward by the neck, and thought to have unhorsed him. But the prince, always firm on his saddle, kept himself erect, and suddenly spurring his courser, carried off the count from his horse, and then easily shook him to the ground. The play soon became a real conflict, from the vexation of the Savoyards; and the count, a little refreshed, attempted a second encounter; but feeling again Edward's decided superiority, he acknowledged it, and the dangerous diversion ceased<sup>8</sup>.

It

<sup>6</sup> Matt. Westm. p. 300; who adds, "ut moris est novis militibus."

<sup>7</sup> The Troubadour Paulet, in his pastoral dialogue between himself and a shepherdess, makes her say of the prince of Arragon, "I should rejoice to see this noble infant and Edward firmly united. Scions of the same stock, possessed of great qualities, dear to their friends, and dreaded by their enemies, they would acquire high glory by their mutual support, and would achieve great conquests." The troubadour answers, "These young princes are indeed generous, skilful and illustrious in arms; they will never rest content with a diminution of their inheri-

tance: why is not the joust and the round table prepared, where many a helm shall be cloven, and many a hauberk unlaced?" 3 Hist. Troub. p. 144.—The Troubadour Austace de Segret calls upon Edward to reconquer the territory which his father had lost in France. Ib. p. 391.

<sup>8</sup> Wals. p. 13. Edward permitted the revival of chivalric exercises, which his father had discouraged.—In 1280, the baron Mortimer held at Kenilworth a round table of 100 knights and as many ladies, to which knights flocked from several countries, to try their prowess. Wals. 8. and 1 *Lel. Coll.* 177.



It was a striking trait in the character of Henry III. and announces great parental judgment and moral worth, that he had impressed the minds of his children with strong filial affection and fraternal concord. It was no less honourable to Edward, that he behaved to his father in his life with zealous duty. He received the news of his death with an emotion which he confessed to be greater than that excited by the loss of his own infant<sup>9</sup>. And he spoke of this revered parent, after his death, with high respect and praise, and raised a superb monument to his memory<sup>10</sup>. Hence, notwithstanding all the energies of his character, he never, like the Cœur de Lion, disturbed his father's repose. He sought, in the most creditable pursuits of the day, the reputation which young minds covet; and having restored his parent to the throne, from which others had displaced him, he employed against the Saracens in Palestine that activity of mind and strength of frame, which Richard, in a similar situation and with similar endowments, had used to embitter and shorten his father's life. The length and prosperity of their reigns, and the creditable evolution of their characters, were proportionably different.

Edward, in his expedition to Palestine, arrived at Acre with 1,000 men. After pausing a month, to refresh his companions, increase their force, and acquaint himself with the country, he attacked Nazareth with 7,000 men, took it, and repulsed the hostile army that hovered on his rear. Receiving information that the Saracens had collected in a town several miles off, for a yearly festival,

<sup>9</sup> His answer to the king of Sicily, who expressed his surprise at the circumstance, was, "A son may be replaced, but the loss of a parent is irremediable." Wals. p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> When an impostor was brought to him, whom he knew to be a bad man, and who pretended to have been restored to sight at Henry's tomb, Edward said, "I know my

father's justice was so great that he would have rather put this knave's eyes out than have restored them." Wals. p. 9.—In the tenth year of his reign he built a superb monument for his father, at Westminster, of some valuable jasper which he had brought out of France. Triv. p. 254.

PART  
III.REIGN OF  
EDWARD I.

festival, he marched with a chosen body to surprise them. In the day time he sheltered his followers in woods and caverns. On the third day, he reached the chosen spot. His followers were but few; the enemy numerous, but unaware of his vicinity. At the following dawn he burst upon them, so completely unseen and unsuspected, that all the Mussulmen were either destroyed or dispersed. An immense booty of cattle and property was taken, with the loss of only one esquire. It is painful to read of the cruel customs of the warfare of this unformed age. In this attack, and at Nazareth, all the Saracens, even the women and the children, were put to the sword<sup>11</sup>. It is no small evidence of the improvement of mankind, that such inhumanity would now affix infamy indelible.

Edward distinguished himself so much by his activity and skill, that an attempt was made to assassinate him. In Persia and Syria, a strange description of people had resided for above a century, known by the name of Assassins<sup>12</sup>. In Syria they lived in the mountainous country above Tortosa, but subordinate to the Persian chief. They are described as performing implicitly the orders of their Sheik; and by an anomalous depravation of their moral habits, they were frequently employed to murder those, whether Christians or Mohamedans, with whom their leaders were dissatisfied. No Jesuit obeyed more passively the commands of his general. Even the celebrated Saladin was once the subject of their attack. A mystical belief that the divine spirit always animated the

<sup>11</sup> Chron. de Mailros ap. Gale Script. vol. 2. p. 241. and Chron. Hem. ap. Gale, vol. 3. p. 590.

<sup>12</sup> The assassins of Persia are noticed by the Armenian Haiton, by Marco Polo, Elmacin, and by Abulpharagius. Those of Syria are mentioned by William of Tyre, Benjamin of Tudela, and many others, whom M. Falconet has cited in his elaborate, but

rather confused, memoir on this singular people, Mem. Acad. des Inscript. vol. 26. p. 202—277.—From one of their sheiks they were also called Ismalicus. Ib. p. 240.

<sup>13</sup> The word sheikh, implying elder as well as chief, has occasioned, by its inaccurate translation, the idea of “the old man of the mountains,” who has been said to be their sovereign.



the person of their Imaum, sanctified every enterprise which he enjoined<sup>14</sup>. By one of these the life of Edward was attempted.

CHAP.  
II.  
REIGN OF  
EDWARD I.

The civilities which had passed between this prince and the Turkish Emir at Joppa, led to the crime. The Turk was upbraided by his Sultan for the intimacy. The Emir, perhaps for safety, declared that he meant it to ensnare<sup>15</sup>. It was at least converted to this purpose, and a youthful assassin was sent with letters to Edward from his Turkish friend. Edward was reclining on his couch in the heat of the evening, clothed in a slight tunic; his friends were in a distant corner; and the youth, searching his belt, as if for more secret communications, suddenly drew an envenomed dagger, and struck at the prince's side. Edward caught the blow on his arm, felled the assailant to the ground with his foot, and, wrenching his weapon, plunged it into his body<sup>16</sup>. Edward had married Eleonora, the daughter of Alphonso, king of Castile. A Spanish historian annexes the interesting incident, that Eleonora drew the poison from her husband's wound with her lips<sup>17</sup>. That she was with him, is allowed; but no English chronicler mentions this affectionate heroism. The annalist, who is most circumstantial in his account, describes the Master of the Temple as advising medicaments to make the poison harmless, and the surgeons as dressing the wound. But the flesh blackening around it, the weeping princess was compelled to withdraw, till the necessary excisions were completed<sup>18</sup>. The Sultan disavowed the assassination; and a truce of ten years was agreed upon, during which

Edward

<sup>14</sup> Falconet, p. 241.

<sup>15</sup> It is to be regretted that the chronicle of Mailros here breaks off abruptly, because the writer declares that he wrote from the information of a person who had borne arms there. p. 243.

<sup>16</sup> W. Hem. 3 Gale, 591.

<sup>17</sup> It is Roderic Santius (not Rod. Tolet. as Camden states) who has mentioned the cir-

cumstance in honour of the general character of the Spanish ladies: he says, *ut vera perhibent annalia*. l. 1. p. 126. I know not his authorities; he wrote himself 200 years after the event. Rod. Tolet. merely mentions his birth, and then closes his history. p. 148.

<sup>18</sup> Hemingf. 591. Brunne, in his translation of Langtoft, notices the assassination, p. 228. but does not mention the princess.



PART  
III.  
REIGN OF  
EDWARD I.

Edward embarked for Europe. The first part of his returning voyage was to Sicily, where its king, Charles, received him with courteous honours, and sent his son to conduct him to the borders of his dominions<sup>19</sup>. When he approached the papal territory, the cardinals came out to meet him, and accompanied him to the Pope, who listened respectfully to his complaint of the assassination of his kinsman at mass, by Guy de Montfort, and excommunicated the murderer<sup>20</sup>. From Rome, Edward proceeded through the principal cities of Italy, every where received with public honours and acclamations. In Savoy he found at the foot of the mountains the English prelates and nobles, waiting to congratulate him, and to attend him to England. As he passed through France, he did homage for his French dominions; then directed his course to Gascony, where he subdued a rebelling noble<sup>21</sup>; and at last reaching England, he was received in London with great popular exultation, the merchants casting gold and silver out of their windows as he passed<sup>22</sup>. He was crowned, with his queen, at Westminster, in the presence of the king of Scotland<sup>23</sup>, the duke of Bretagne, his own mother, and the gratulating parliament, and with the usual festivities<sup>24</sup>.

Of the intellectual education of Edward, we have no information.

<sup>19</sup> Wals. 5.

<sup>20</sup> Id. ib.

<sup>21</sup> Gasto de Biern. He was brought next year to England with a halter about his neck. Though he appealed to the court of France against his liege sovereign, Edward gave him his life, but kept him some years in custody in the castle at Winchester. After his release he became a grateful and obedient servant.

<sup>22</sup> Chron. ap. 2 *Lel. Collect.* p. 471.—The king of Scotland is described as coming with an hundred knights on horseback, who, dismounting on their arrival, let their horses

loose, with their trappings, to be taken by the populace. *Ib.*

<sup>23</sup> The first offence that the king of Wales gave to Edward was, that he chose to be absent from this coronation; the next was his refusal to do homage when summoned. Wals. 5.

<sup>24</sup> Among the records of Rymer are the orders issued for collecting provisions from the different counties, for the King's coronation. Thus Gloucester had to furnish 60 oxen, 60 hogs, 2 fat boars, 60 live sheep, 3,000 capons, 40 quarters of bacon, &c.

tion. But his father's reign was the æra of great cultivation of knowledge in England; and his legislation evinces an enlarged and enlightened mind. That he was fond of the chivalric romances of the day, is implied by the expressions of one of their composers or transcribers<sup>25</sup>.

CHAP.  
II.  
REIGN OF  
EDWARD I.

The reign of Edward, was that of a prince whose sedate judgment and active talents advanced the civilization and power of his country. It may be considered under four heads: his incorporation of Wales; his wars in Scotland; his foreign transactions; and his internal regulations.

As the descendants of the original population of Britain, the Welsh must always be an interesting people. The very barbarism so long perpetuated in their principality, renders them of more antiquarian value, because it occasioned their language, their poetry, and their customs, to continue for many ages in their ancient state, little varied, because wilfully unimproved. They were too proud to deviate into the civilization and knowledge of the usurpers of their country; and the Welsh of the thirteenth century, with whom Edward conflicted, seem to have differed little from the Cymry, who, under their venerated Arthur, had laboured so unavailingly to drive the Saxon and the English to the Eyder and the Elbe.

His conquest  
of Wales.

The history of Wales, from the tenth century, is little else than the history of perpetual and inglorious bloodshed. Usurpers, irascible princes, ambitious kinsmen, or depredating chieftains, are exhibited as successively destroying each other, and depopulating their country; while England was advancing in a steady progression, under a settled government and internal tranquillity. If the storms of civil warfare sometimes paused, other evils arose to this unhappy people from the hostility of the Anglo-Normans, whose

<sup>25</sup> See the MS. French romances, mentioned in the Hist. of England, vol. i. p. 467.



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whose incursions were often temporary conquests. It can be of no use to chronicle these details of human slaughter, or to particularize the individuals who most distinguished themselves in the work of blood<sup>26</sup>: they belong to the barbarous periods of European history, which are fast passing into that oblivion from which it would be absurd to rescue them.

After long interruptions of usurpations, the right line of the antient British princes was restored in Gryffyth ap Cynan<sup>27</sup>, in North Wales; and was transmitted, through successive descendants<sup>28</sup>, to Llewelyn ap Gryffyth, the last sovereign of Wales<sup>29</sup>. The hostilities of William the Conqueror, and his son Rufus, made a serious impression on the southern provinces; and two colonies of Flemings were, in the reigns of Henry I. and Henry II. successfully established there<sup>30</sup>.

The military subjection of Wales diminished during the reign of John, and in the first years of his son. But as Edward advanced to

<sup>26</sup> Wynne's History of Wales contains Dr. Powell's publication of Humphrey Llwyd's more ancient Work, made up from old chronicles, much augmented, or, as he says, improved. It gives the leading incidents of the Welsh story, but has left the ground as sterile as he found it. His preface is a feeble attempt to support the credit of Jeffry. His appendix contains the genealogies of Owen Tudor, and some state papers, principally concerning the discussions between Edward I. and the last princes of Wales. Warrington's History of Wales gives only the common facts.

<sup>27</sup> A Welsh history of this prince has been printed from an ancient MS. in the Archæology of Wales, vol. 2. pp. 583—605. I am sorry that his countrymen have not preserved more details about him. He is said to have reigned, but with chequered fortune, 57 years. Under his auspices several statutes were made, reforming the Welsh bards. He certainly gave a new impulse to the Welsh

genius, for it is from his reign that its poetry began to revive, after laying torpid nearly four centuries. One of the first poems of its revival is the elegy written on him by Meilyr, in 1137, when he died. In this the bard celebrates his patronage. He tells us, that he has been seated by his side when the gold-encompassed mead was circling—that he had been sent as a messenger from the splendid Chief of conflict, and that from him no singer experienced a denial. See the Canau Meilyr, in the Archæol. of Wales, vol. 1. pp. 188. 190.

<sup>28</sup> Owen of Gwynedd, the patron and the theme of the celebrated bards Gwalchmai and Cynddelew, was the son of Gryffyth ap Cynan.

<sup>29</sup> Wynne, p. 109.

<sup>30</sup> These invasions are noticed by the Anglo-Norman Chroniclers. The Welsh bards, in their tissue of angry feeling and declamatory epithets, convey no historical information.



to maturity, his martial spirit found in this country an inviting theatre for his exploits.

At the age of twenty-four, he had led his father's forces over the Severn, and penetrated to Snowdon; but the Welsh fell back to their fastnesses, and the conquerors withdrew. When he became king, one of his first projects was to subdue the country, and to annex it to his English crown. It is dangerous to praise ambition. But this was one of those few military conquests which benefit humanity. Nothing short of the extinction of its native sovereignties, and its incorporation with England, could terminate those scenes of murder and devastation<sup>31</sup>, which were succeeding each other with no prospect of cessation. Edward's character is responsible for his personal motives to the enterprise; but its achievement was a blessing to both countries<sup>32</sup>.

It would be unprofitable now to investigate the mutual complaints which passed between Edward and Llewelyn. Both had aggressions to detail, and wrongs to resent<sup>33</sup>; and we cannot now decide impartially on the justice of their recriminations. Edward began his attack with every form of solemnity. He had the Welsh king excom-

CHAP.  
II.

REIGN OF  
EDWARD I.

1263.

<sup>31</sup> We see the reputation for ferocity, which the Welsh enjoyed, in the reproach which the archbishop of Canterbury made to them at this period: "We mourn bitterly this, that the Welsh are said to be more cruel than the Saracens; for when the infidels make captives, they keep them to be redeemed by money; but the Welsh, from their delight in blood, massacre them, or, what is worse, take the money for their release, and then murder them." Process. A.B. Cant. ap. Wilkin's Concil. vol. 2. p. 73. The Welsh king, in his answer, admits that one person redeemed was thus destroyed, but that the criminal was wandering in the woods like a thief. He charges the English also, with sparing neither sex,

age, nor disease, nor any sacred place. Ib. p. 74.

<sup>32</sup> The Archbishop is pleased to tell Edward "that the public necessity had compelled the *innocence* of his heart to raise his banners against the untameable perversity of the Welsh." p. 101.—The public utility of the war is more evident than the purity of Edward's intentions in waging it.

<sup>33</sup> The bickerings with Wales had been frequent in Henry the Third's reign. See Matthew Paris, 937—981.—Wynne has stated the grievances mutually complained of, in his edition of Powel's History of Wales, 281—297, and in its Appendix, 363—398.

excommunicated, and the English parliament pronounced judgment against him<sup>34</sup>. The first invasions produced the submission of Llewelyn, on conditions sufficiently humiliating<sup>35</sup>. But rigour never conciliates, and the warfare was soon revived, by the irritation and pride of the oppressed, to the satisfaction of the oppressor.

On the submission of Llewelyn, his brother David had been treated by Edward with peculiar distinction, who had made him a knight, given him large possessions<sup>36</sup>, married him to a lady of his queen's bedchamber, and appointed him seneschal of all his castles in Wales. David is described to have been an ingenious, but a crafty and plotting man. He soon persuaded Llewelyn to try again the fortune of war, which had twice disgraced him. Edward advanced into Wales by land, and sent the fleet of the Cinque Ports to Anglesey. When he learnt that they had taken it, he exclaimed, "Llewelyn has lost the finest feather in his tail<sup>37</sup>," and caused a bridge of boats, surmounted with planks, to be made over the Menai, preparatory to his penetrating to Snowdon. On these celebrated mountains, the Welsh king fortified himself, and drove into the sea seven knights bannerets and three hundred armed men, whom he surprised at the passage. Llewelyn thus commanding the bridge, the English were unable to pass; when a traitorous Welshman told their General, that he had discovered a ford unknown to others, through which they could wade, strike the Welsh who watched the bridge in their rear, and, by dispersing them, open a passage to the army. Ignorant of this intended movement, and anxious to ascertain the dispositions of the people, and to explore the intentions of his enemy, the king descended from his army in the mountains with only one esquire. Having reconnoitred as he wished, he was resting in a barn, when he heard

a military

<sup>34</sup> Rymer Act. Fœd. vol. 2. pp. 79 & 68.

<sup>35</sup> See them in Wynne, 284.

<sup>36</sup> Edward had given David half of Snow-

don and its vallies, and of Anglesey. Cal. Rot. p. 5.

<sup>37</sup> Hemingford, vol. 1. p. 9.



a military shout. A moment's doubt came over him; but recollecting himself; he asked his esquire, "Are not my Welsh at the bridge?" The answer assured him that they were. "Then am I safe," cried the king, ignorant of the impending future, "though all England should be on the other side<sup>38</sup>." The noise soon not only increased, but came nearer, and he was astonished to behold English banners advancing. They had struck their unexpected blow at his advanced guard, and their main body were rapidly passing the river. He now tried to regain his camp, but was suddenly crossed in his way by an English knight, who, ignorant of his rank, but discerning him to be a Welshman, advanced immediately upon him. The contest was unavoidable; and the king was too courageous to decline it; but he was lightly armed; and the lance of the Englishman was thrown with a fatal strength and precision; it pierced Llewelyn's side; and the last king of Wales fell dead, but unknown. The English knight, unconscious of the importance of his exploit, fell back to join his countrymen, who were now in full march on the fortified mountains. The Welsh formed eagerly on their cliffs, prepared for battle; but awaiting the return and directions of their sovereign. In vain they watched the vallies for his approach, in vain ascended the highest eminences to descry him; they saw their dreaded foes already ascending their steeps, to close in deadly conflict, and they had not their royal leader to animate or to guide them. Before they recovered from their disappointment, the English banners began to wave on their heights, and they found themselves attacked on all sides with an impetuosity and success, which soon scattered them in a panic, from which they could not be rallied. All who could escape the English sword, fled in hopeless confusion; and the unexpected casualties of this eventful day annexed the  
sovereignty

<sup>38</sup> Hemingford, p. 11.



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sovereignty of Wales to the crown of England, with a facility that could never have been anticipated. The curiosity of the knight having been excited by the rumours of the field, he descended into the valley, to see whom he had encountered. He found the dead body still on the ground, and, examining its face, it was recognized to be Llewelyn<sup>39</sup>. Eager to derive the full profit of his fortunate encounter, he degraded his chivalry by mutilating the corpse of the head, which he carried to Edward. The king had not the magnanimity of William the Conqueror, who reprimanded the knight who had wounded the dead body of Harold; but sent the head up to London, adorned in derision with a silver crown, that it might be exhibited to the populace in Cheapside, and fixed upon the Tower<sup>40</sup>. David attempted to renew the war, and summoned his nobles to his aid; but, though he was able to protract the struggle to autumn, he was chased, beaten and taken; and Edward, always ferocious in his revenge, again evinced his insensibility to princely honour, in his treatment of his captive. He caused him, after a parliamentary sentence at Shrewsbury, to be drawn on a hurdle, and hanged; and sent his amputated head to London<sup>41</sup>. For what crime, which death could not expiate, were the bodies of these princes thus insulted? The defence of a throne which they had been born to, and the assertion of the independence of a country which had always disdained the yoke of an invader. The union of

<sup>39</sup> Hemingf. p. 11. and Knyghton Chron. p. 2463—2465. This author, loose, and often fabulous in his earlier annals, becomes authentic as he approaches his own times, and curious for the original documents which he interweaves in his compilation.

<sup>40</sup> The archbishop of Canterbury states, in his epistle to Edward (Rymer, vol. 2. p. 224) "That letters in cypher had been found in Llewelyn's pockets, by which it

appeared that he had secret correspondencies with persons in England."

<sup>41</sup> Hemingf. 13. Knyghton, 2465. It is loathsome to read of these useless barbarities, which, to the honour of the present reign, of the parliament, and of the author of the measure, are now abolished. The heart and bowels burnt—the head fixed near his brother's—and the four quarters of the body exposed at Bristol, Northampton, York and Winchester. Matt. West. vol. 2. p. 371.

of Wales with England was advantageous to both. But the resistance of the Welsh kings was too natural to excite resentment in a generous enemy; too courageous, from the inadequacy of their means, not to deserve his admiration; and too consonant with the national feelings of their countrymen, not to command his respect for its patriotism, and his pity for their fate<sup>42</sup>. But Edward's character, like that of Henry I. exhibits great mental eminence, unconnected, where ambition was concerned, with the amiable virtues of the heart. His prudence never erred; but his sensibility, touched too keenly by revenge, rarely acted right<sup>43</sup>.

Edward pursued his victory to all the beneficial consequences that could be derived from it. Wales was annexed to the crown of England, divided into counties, placed under sheriffs, and was admitted to a participation of the more important of the English institutions<sup>44</sup>. By a fortunate or purposed coincidence, his queen was afterwards delivered of a son at Carnarvon Castle; and although the Cambro-Britons, in possession of their independence, would have disdained the son of an Englishman for their sovereign, yet when the triumph of their invader was complete, there can be no doubt that their national vanity derived consolation from the recollection, that their future prince was their countryman. It is at least stated, that when Edward some years afterwards created this son the prince of Wales, the inhabitants of the peninsula were peculiarly gratified<sup>45</sup>.

This

<sup>42</sup> The Welsh rhymers' Latin lines on his prince, are meant to imitate the peculiar alliteration and rhymes of Welsh poetry:

Hic jacet Anglorum tortor, tutor Venedorum  
Princeps Wallorum, Lewlinus regulamorum,  
Forma futurorum, dux, laus, lex, lux popu-  
lorum.—Wals. p. 11.

<sup>43</sup> In the same cruel manner he had another Welsh prince destroyed, who was in arms against him in 1293. M. West. 386.

<sup>44</sup> The king distributed the lands in the middle of Wales among his chieftains, but retained in his own hands the maritime castles. This policy is remarked to have occasioned great tranquillity. Walsingh. Hist. p. 11.

<sup>45</sup> "When the Welsh heard this, they rejoiced greatly, deeming him their lawful lord, because he was born in their country." Wals. 47.—So Matt. West. 416.



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This incorporation with England was an unquestionable blessing to Wales. That country ceased immediately to be the theatre of homicide and distress, and began to imitate the English habits<sup>46</sup>. I know nothing that more strongly marks the beneficial change, than the new features which the Welsh poetry after that event assumed. We see no more, in endless repetition, the horrible imagery of the prowling wolf, the gushing blood, and the screaming kite feasting on human prey. It is no longer the baneful encomium on the wasteful conflict and the barbarous chief. The fair sex now begin to be the occasional subject of the bardic lay, and their charms impart that inspiration, which had been derived before only from the mead cup and the princely gift. Satire now proceeds to scatter its jokes and gibes; the praise of the sword is abandoned for the lampoon and the song; and the Muse finds that delight in beauty, rural nature, ethical truth, religion, and harmless sarcasm, which she had formerly experienced only in murder and devastation<sup>47</sup>. The numerous forces which the principality furnished to the king, in his expeditions to Scotland and Flanders, evince the addition of national strength which England derived from the union.

That Edward ordered a massacre of the Welsh bards, seems rather to be the vindictive tradition of an irritated nation, than an historical fact. The destruction of the independent sovereignties of Wales, abolished the patronage of the bards; and in the cessation of internal warfare and of external ravages, they lost their favourite

<sup>46</sup> "Collecting treasures, and dreading losses, like others." Wals. 27. The agriculture of the country was also benefited by the conquest, for Edward had the woods in Wales cut down, because they afford military defences and retreats to the hostile people. Wals. ib.

<sup>47</sup> See the poems of Casnodryn on the fair

Gwenlliant, and on the Trinity. Arch. Wales, vol. 1. pp. 421. 427. See also the lyric poems on Gruffud, on various females, and on religious subjects, 454—532: and the satires and verses of the succeeding poets of the fourteenth century. In David ap Gwilym, who comes afterwards, we have a sweet, prolific, and playful muse.



favourite subjects and most familiar imagery. They declined, because they were no longer encouraged, and their disappearance has been mistaken for their extirpation<sup>48</sup>.

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His wars  
with Scot-  
land.

Edward had reigned nearly twenty years with increasing reputation and prosperity, when those transactions with Scotland began, which show that even a sagacious and honourable mind may be urged, by the impatience of ambition, to actions inconsistent with its probity. The same benefits which were connected with the incorporation of England and Wales, would have followed a cordial union between North and South Britain; the experience of the last century has proved how largely it has increased the happiness and improvements of both: and it does credit to Edward's judgment as a statesman, that he projected its accomplishment, by contracting a marriage between his son and the Scottish heiress<sup>49</sup>. But it was a measure that could be successful and beneficial only so far as the union was voluntary, and as the means of establishing it should be peaceable and just. Patriotic feelings, ever honourable to the individuals who cherish them within the bounds of moral duty, and protecting so usefully the independence of states, are in their first impulse averse to national incorporations; time only can lead the general mind to a perception of their advantages, and to the adoption of measures for diminishing or averting their inconveniences. But violence, precipitation and wrong, kindle a spirit of resistance, dangerous from its contagious sympathy and vivacious pertinacity, and transmitting to posterity those rancorous antipathies, which produce sufferings to both

<sup>48</sup> The good sense of the Welsh antiquaries of the present day (Camb. Reg. for 1795, p. 414, and for 1796, p. 463) allows, and indeed has suggested, the scepticism of that popular story on which Gray has founded his "Bard," one of the noblest effusions of the lyric genius of the eighteenth century.

<sup>49</sup> Buchanan says justly, in his classical history, "Nec odia vetusta unquam commodius aboleri posse videbantur, quàm si uterque populus, honestis et æquis conditionibus, in unum coiret." l. 8. s. 2.

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both countries, for many generations. Edward, by a casualty of nature, missed the quiet gratification of his wishes. Wisdom and humanity would have counselled him to have acquiesced in their postponement; but his sense of his own power led him to endeavour to extort that by its unexpected exertion, which was only attainable and only valuable when willingly conceded. His primary injustice experienced the retribution of temporary triumphs, succeeded rapidly by signal disappointments, and at last bitterly avenged in the disgrace and disasters of his only son.—But wrong can never be committed without disquieting consequences.—Perhaps the death of his queen Eleonora<sup>50</sup>, to whom he was tenderly attached, leaving a void in his domestic comforts, disposed him to seek amusement even from the troubles of ambition.

The sudden death of the king of Scotland, Alexander III. in 1286, occasioned the calamities which followed. He had married for his second wife the daughter of the Earl of Dreux, and one dark night he went with a small retinue to her mansion, a few miles off: as he approached it, his horse stumbled, and threw him: he was raised from the ground, but his neck was broken, and he instantly expired<sup>51</sup>. His only heir was his grand-daughter Margaret, then in Norway, about three years of age, the offspring of a marriage between its king, Eric, and Alexander's daughter. Edward was in Gascony at the time of Alexander's catastrophe. The Scottish nobles sent to him, for his advice. He recommended the appointment of guardians<sup>52</sup>; and six noblemen were chosen to govern the kingdom during

<sup>50</sup> She died near Lincoln, December 1291. The king never forgot her. Her character is painted by the chroniclers with warm panegyric, for her modesty, piety, benevolence and urbanity. She was brought to Westminster, and wherever her body rested, the king had magnificent crosses, with her

effigy, erected to her memory, that the passenger might breathe a prayer for her soul. Wals. 16. One of these at Waltham Cross still remains. Those in Cheapside and at Charing Cross have disappeared.

<sup>51</sup> Hemingf. p. 29.

<sup>52</sup> Ib. p. 30.



during the absence of its young queen<sup>53</sup>. Edward, embracing the favourable opportunity of accomplishing a great and wise scheme of policy, had proposed an alliance between this princess and his eldest son, his intended successor. The Scottish parliament liberally agreed to his proposals, on conditions calculated to preserve the independence of their country<sup>54</sup>. After some negotiations, her father, the king of Norway, permitted her to sail to Britain; but by the time she reached the Orkneys, her health became impaired. She landed there in 1290<sup>55</sup>, and shortly after expired. Her death destroyed all Edward's political hopes and combinations for the welfare of both countries; and his moral fortitude was unequal to the disappointment. Violent factions arose immediately in Scotland, which tempted his selfish passions. Thirteen claimants urged pretensions to the crown<sup>56</sup>; but the main competition and only probable rights lay between Baliol and Bruce. Baliol was the grandson of the eldest daughter of their common ancestor; Bruce was the son of the second daughter. The impartial Scottish lawyers seem to admit that Baliol was the legal heir. Both were descended from Norman ancestors.

That Edward was invited by one of the regents of Scotland to interfere on this occasion, is clear from the letter of the Bishop of St. Andrew's; whose language implies, not only that his dread of civil warfare was his ostensible motive, but also that he had Edward's interest distinctly in his view<sup>57</sup>.

That

<sup>53</sup> Fordun. Scoti. Chron. vol. 4. p. 951. Hearne's ed.

<sup>54</sup> See the treaty in Rymer's *Acta Fœdera*, vol. 2. p. 482. Lord Hailes has given the substance of the articles, in his temperate and judicious *Annals*, vol. 1. pp. 190—193.

<sup>55</sup> Walsing. p. 16. Matt. West. 377. Fordun, p. 953. The bishop of St. Andrew's sent to Edward the first rumours of her

death, and mentions the perturbation it had occasioned. Rymer *Fœd.* vol. 2. p. 1090.

<sup>56</sup> See them enumerated, and their genealogies, in Rymer, pp. 575—580; and in Hailes' *Annals*, 208—212. Mr. Chalmers, in the first volume of his *Caledonia*, has diligently investigated the genealogy of Bruce. The substance of his researches is stated also in Kerr's *History of Robert Bruce*.

<sup>57</sup> "We shall be involved in blood, unless the



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That Edward sent his authorized agents, to persuade the Scottish chieftains to submit the succession to the crown of Scotland to his ordination, is the express assertion of the English historian<sup>58</sup>; and that the Scottish parliament should assemble at his request in England, at Norham<sup>59</sup>, is evidence that they approved of the suggestion. It is probable that if there had been no competition for the crown, the Scottish nobles would have disdained a king of England's interference; but the certainty of the sufferings of all, from the strength of the principal rivals, if the sword were once drawn in Scotland on the quarrel, induced them to defer their pride to their welfare; and the example of the dispute about the crown of Sicily having been referred to Edward's decision, may have operated at this juncture to incline them to a similar expedient<sup>60</sup>.

But if temptation be dangerous to the best of mankind, in the ordinary concerns of life, how much more irresistible are the attractions of an attainable crown. Some magnanimous minds have appeared in history, who, satisfied with the glory of the reference, would have disdained to abuse it; and the wisdom of such conduct would have been equal to its heroism. But Edward's ambition was of a more vulgar cast. His power was unbroken; Scotland was divided, and, from its divisions, defenceless. His honour yielded to the seduction of the opportunity; and he met the Scottish parliament

the Most High provide a remedy by your interposition." He requests Edward to advance to the Marches, to prevent the effusion of blood; and he recommends him to take care that his royal honour and interest were preserved, and that the person chosen should adhere to his advice. Rymer 2. p. 1090. Hailes 197. This is dated 7 Oct. 1290.

<sup>58</sup> Hemingf. 31.

<sup>59</sup> They met on the 10th May 1291, at the parish church of Norham. Hem. p. 32.

<sup>60</sup> Lord Hailes, p. 190. seems to doubt that the Scottish nobles agreed to leave the decision to Edward; but Barbour, almost a contemporary, affirms it, p. 6. and exclaiming,

A! blynd folk full of foly  
Haid ye unbethocht you enkerly  
Quhat perell to you mycht apper  
Ye had not wrocht on that maner.

He adds, that if they had remembered Edward's conduct to Wales, they would not have made him their arbitrator. p. 7.

ment at Norham, to which he had summoned all his military force in the northern counties, with an express declaration of his feudal sovereignty over Scotland, and a peremptory demand of its immediate recognition<sup>61</sup>. The astonished Scotchmen demanded time for deliberation.

On the 2d of June they assembled again; and the chancellor of England told them, that as the Scots, though required, had produced nothing to invalidate the king's right, he was resolved, as lord paramount, to determine the succession<sup>62</sup>. Turning then to Bruce, he asked him, if he would receive Edward's judgment, as superior lord? Bruce assenting<sup>63</sup>, the same question was put to all the other claimants present, with the same result. Baliol was absent. He had probably waited to watch the event of the day, and the conduct of his rivals. On the next day he imitated their conduct<sup>64</sup>. And thus Edward quietly obtained a solemn admission of his novel claim, which changed the very foundation of the Scottish constitution.

Edward had supported his claim by quotations from the old chroniclers, of the homages performed by the Scottish kings to the Anglo-Saxon sovereigns. But these, though expressed in general terms, may be fairly interpreted to mean no more than homage for English possessions<sup>65</sup>, like that which the Norman kings paid to France, for their French territories. His strongest precedent was the submission of William the Lion to Henry II. as that was unquestionably

<sup>61</sup> The speech delivered by Brabazon, his great justiciary, is in Hemingford, p. 32. and in Rymer, 543. The document in Rymer is a journal of what passed at Norham, composed by one of Edward's clerics.

<sup>62</sup> Rymer, p. 544. Hailes, 202.

<sup>63</sup> His assent was given, the record says, "finaliter expresse, publice, et aperte." Rymer, 545.

<sup>64</sup> Rymer, 545—548.

<sup>65</sup> Walsing. p. 17. Heming. p. 33. Some of the expressions of the ancient chronicles are strong, as Sax. Chron. p. 111; Chron. Mail. p. 147; Hen. Hunt. 355; Malm. 48. But they are too general to be proper foundations for a claim so important. That a king should cite chronicles in evidence of such a right, implies a total deficiency of records: and their absence, if such a cession had been made, is at least suspicious.



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unquestionably for Scotland itself; but the force of this instance was averted by the renunciation of the feudal superiority, which this same William purchased of Richard I. But though the arguments and the proofs of Edward were feeble, his power, and the urgency of the moment, were great. The competitors, eager for the expected dignity, and unwilling to displease their appointed umpire, even signed instruments, acknowledging his sovereign seignior, and giving him seisin of all the land, and of all its castles<sup>66</sup>. He placed his own governors in these, and returned to England.

His feudal sovereignty being recognised, his measures to ascertain the rights of the claimants were strictly just. Baliol and Bruce were allowed to name forty commissioners each, to whom Edward was to add twenty-four, who were to investigate the subject impartially, and report the result of their inquiry<sup>67</sup>. The competitors stated their claims. But ten abandoned their feeble pretensions before the sentence was pronounced. Baliol, Bruce, and the descendant of a younger daughter, were the only persons who persisted in their rights. The Scottish commissioners made their report, and advised the claims of Baliol and Bruce to be first considered. Their respective reasonings were heard<sup>68</sup>. The commissioners and parliament decided, that the succession to the

CROWN

<sup>66</sup> See these in Hemingford, p. 34. In the instrument signed by Bruce, Baliol, Comyn, and six others, they declare, "volums, assentons et grantoms de resever dreit devant lui cum Sovereyn seigneur de la terre." Ib. Yet though Bruce signed this instrument, Barbour, escaping from history into poetry, in order to exalt the ancestor of Bruce, his hero, makes him disdain to yield to Edward the senyhowry (the sovereignty). To Edward's proposal,

Gyff yow will hald in cheyff off me  
I sall do swa yow sall be king—

He makes his Bruce to reply, that he does not yearn for the kingdom;

Bot gyff it fall off rycht to me  
And gyff God will that it sa be  
I sall als frely in all thing  
Hald it as it belongs to king.

He paints Edward as declaring in wrath, that for this declaration he shall not have it; and Baliol as assenting to the king "in all his will," p. 10. and thereby gaining the prize.—But this is poetry!!

<sup>67</sup> Rymer, 555. Hailes' Ann. 205.

<sup>68</sup> See them in Hailes, 215—220.



crown ought to be determined in the same manner as the succession to earldoms and baronies; and, on the conclusion of the pleadings, adjudged, that by the laws and usages of both kingdoms in every heritable succession, the descendant from the eldest sister, even though more remote in one degree, was preferable to the descendant from the second sister, though one degree nearer. The application of this determination to the competitors was, that Baliol, the grandson of the eldest daughter, was to be preferred to Bruce, the son of the second daughter of their common ancestor. On this decision, Edward pronounced his final decree in favour of Baliol, on the 17th November 1292; but took care to provide that this judgment should not impair his own rights<sup>69</sup>. He exacted from Baliol, after he was put in possession of his kingdom, an oath of fealty; and in less than a month after his coronation, the new sovereign was compelled to repeat his homage.

This interested conduct of Edward on his feudal claim, tainted the credit of his just award, and alarmed and disquieted the Scottish mind. The basest designs against Scotland have been imputed to him; and he has been supposed to have put up Baliol as a puppet, merely to dethrone him, and to incorporate the two countries. In justice to one of the greatest sovereigns that has swayed the English sceptre, it is important to remark, that, although the incorporation of Scotland became at last his determination, there are not sufficient grounds to impeach his probity with this plan, before the conduct of the Scotch led him to adopt it. All that he claimed at the outset, was the feudal sovereignty of Scotland. But so had the king of France been the feudal sovereign of Normandy and Gascony; and yet the kings of England, who did homage for these possessions, had enjoyed the government of those countries with sufficient independence. There is no evidence

<sup>69</sup> Rymer, 589. Hailes, 214. 221.

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evidence that, when Baliol was crowned, the king of England projected to abolish the Scottish royalty or parliament. To be the lord paramount, the feudal sovereign of the whole island, as the king of France had been of Normandy, Bretagne, Flanders, and Aquitain, while these provinces were enjoying their independent hereditary governments, was the honour to which Edward aspired; and the great political object which he would have attained by it, would have been a termination of the predatory wars which had always desolated the borders of the two kingdoms. It was a species of impiety and perjury for the liegeman to make war on his feudal lord; and it exposed him to the loss of life and territory. Scotland becoming a royal fief of the English crown, a new sacred bond of amity was established between the two countries.

The facts, that for four years Edward did nothing incompatible with the continuance of the Scottish royalty, and that it was the wilful hostility of Scotland itself which forced him into the field against it, afford reasonable evidence that the line which we have drawn was the limitation of his ambition. From 1292 to 1296, though he received an appeal against Baliol's judgment, preferred by a Scotchman himself to him as lord paramount<sup>70</sup>, and summoned Baliol to his parliament to answer it, and had expressed displeasure when Baliol, contrary to his oath, attempted to dispute his homage<sup>71</sup>, which the English parliament also resented<sup>72</sup>; yet this was the extent of his adverse conduct. And so far was Edward's behaviour from being revolting to Scottish feeling, that  
Bruce,

<sup>70</sup> This was the case of Macduff's appeal, recited in Edward's writ of summons to Baliol, in *Plac. Parl.* vol. 1. p. 111. Of two other instances mentioned by Lord Hailes, one was a complaint against Edward's own officers; and the other an illegal imprisonment of his officers. *Ann.* pp. 222 & 228.

<sup>71</sup> *Plac. Parl.* 113. The words of Baliol's

written petition, in French, are given in this record. Lord Hailes has dramatized the substance of this legal document, with unusual fancy, and with good effect, in his *Annals*, pp. 230, 231.

<sup>72</sup> See the above record; and Lord Hailes, p. 231.



Bruce, the competitor of Baliol, having died, his family desired Edward to receive its homage, and willingly performed it<sup>73</sup>.

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The resolution of Edward to terminate the separate royalty of Scotland, must be dated, so far as actual evidence appears, from the injudicious conduct of the Scottish king and parliament, which would have led a far less irritable and vindictive sovereign to the same determination; because it proved, that the temporary homage was no bar to a perilous hostility. He was wilfully, and, considering the preceding acquiescence, perfidiously attacked where he ought to have been succoured; and his subsequent aggression on Scotland, was but the retaliation of its injustice.

In 1294, two cinque-port sailors, at a maritime town of Normandy, went to fill their water-casks at a spring at which some foreign seamen were assembled. A quarrel for precedence was followed by a scuffle, in which a Norman was wounded. The Englishmen regained their ship. The French manned their vessels and pursued, took some English ones, and hanged up the men in company with dogs, as a brutal satire. The cinque ports, in revenge, collected their fleet, and a challenge was exchanged to fight the quarrel, on a future day, in the open sea. A large ship, with a standard, was placed in the middle of the waves, as the spot of battle. Both parties collected friends and allies. The English went out with some Irish and Hoyland vessels; the Normans with French, Flemings, and Genoese: and from this unauthorized impulse of spontaneous and mutual resentment, two mighty fleets engaged in deadly conflict, without the governments of either party consenting to the crisis<sup>74</sup>.

After

<sup>73</sup> Hailes' Ann. 229.

<sup>74</sup> W. Hemingf. p. 40. Wals. 20. The day appointed for the engagement was the 14th April. Ib.—M. Westm. remarks, that at this time there was neither king nor law for the

sailors, but whatever any one could take or carry away, that he claimed as his own, p. 396.—Walsingham says the French lost 15,000 men in this struggle. p. 23.

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After a destructive battle, the English conquered. Many thousand seamen were slain, and great numbers drowned. The English brought home 240 captured vessels, laden with booty; and France and England became involved in an angry discussion.

The king of France loudly demanded reparation and punishment<sup>75</sup>. Edward, with temperate magnanimity, sent an ambassador to request appointed conferences, to treat peaceably about it. The French sovereign, listening to no compromise, and perhaps glad of the opportunity, summoned Edward to his court, to answer for the outrage; and because he did not appear, declared his feudal possessions in Gascony to be forfeited, and immediately invaded them<sup>76</sup>.

Edward appealed to his parliament on this flagrant injustice, at which Baliol was present; and they answered, that they would follow him to life or death<sup>77</sup>. The first forces which he sent to Guienne, were defeated, through the incompetence of their commander; and Edward then required Baliol to send him a military aid. Instead of complying with this natural request, Baliol and the Scottish parliament entered into an offensive and defensive treaty with the king of France, which was signed at Sterling in July, and ratified at Paris in October<sup>78</sup>.

By this treaty, the Scotch bound themselves to begin and make war upon Edward with all their strength<sup>79</sup>; and in execution of this engagement, before the king of England had committed any act of hostility against Scotland, or even evinced any inimical design

<sup>75</sup> Hemingford states, that Charles, the French king's brother, had been the real author of the battle. Edward would take no part of their plunder, because the battle had been fought without his order or consent. M. Westm. 387.

<sup>76</sup> Heming. 41.—Matthew of Westminster has inserted Philip's summons in his

History, pp. 387—390, accusing Edward of not being ignorant of the outrage.

<sup>77</sup> Hem. p. 43.

<sup>78</sup> Hem. pp. 75—82. His work contains a copy of the treaty.

<sup>79</sup> “Dicto regi Angliæ—totis viribus suis guerram incipient et facient.” Hem. p. 29.



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20 March  
1296.

design anterior to this treaty, the Scots invaded Cumberland with 40,000 foot and 500 horse, under the command of Comyn, laid waste the country, and besieged Carlisle. In the next month they made a similar aggression on Northumberland<sup>80</sup>; and Baliol, by the advice of his parliament, sent to Edward a written renunciation of his homage and fealty<sup>81</sup>: a feeble and injudicious action. If Baliol had not become Edward's liegeman, a renunciation was unnecessary; if he were so, no liegeman could cancel his fealty without the consent of his lord. The renunciation was therefore evidence of its own absurdity, and, by admitting Baliol's previous homage, precluded him from annulling it.

Edward received these tidings with undissembled indignation and contempt. "Has this felon fool committed such a folly!" was his bitter exclamation<sup>82</sup>. He neglected his war with France, and put his military power in motion immediately against Scotland. He marched to the eastern frontier, took Berwick by storm, and cruelly put its garrison and inhabitants to the sword<sup>83</sup>.

From the hope of finding Edward embarrassed by his war with France, and an insurrection in Wales<sup>84</sup> scarcely suppressed, the Scottish nation was thus, by the passions of its ruling authorities, confronted against the military power of England, at the time when that this power was wielded by a man of consummate ability. In England, the due authority of government and law reached to every part, and brought, on the legal summons, all its warlike resources into efficient and obedient co-operation. In Scotland,

<sup>80</sup> Heming. 87, 88. 93. Hailes, 235.

<sup>81</sup> Rymer Act. Fœd. p. 707. The only reasons which Baliol solemnly alleges for this conduct, are Edward's best exculpation from the rapacious ambition against Scotland with which he has been charged.

<sup>82</sup> "A ce foll felon tel foli fet." Fordun, vol. 4. p. 969. He added, "S'il n'e venira a nous, Nous vendrons a ly." Ib.

<sup>83</sup> Ib. 972. Hemingford says that 8000 men were slain, and the women sent away. p. 92. Matt. West. makes the slain 60,000, a number too improbable to be believed; but he mentions it with a *referuntur*. p. 403.

<sup>84</sup> Hemingford mentions this insurrection, p. 55. and M. West. 395.

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Scotland, the crown was unable in many districts to enforce its lawful prerogatives; and the military aristocracy which attended the sovereign to the field, was often more ready to dispute his commands than to obey them. The English army was then well appointed with the best warlike equipments of the day, was sedulously trained in the discipline that was found most operative, and in the hour of conflict willingly executed the movements which their leader directed. The Scots, too independent and too haughty to like the slavery of military instruction, or to be implicitly subordinate to the commands of a general, were also rarely practised in the evolutions of large bodies, or in the skill of a protracted campaign. They knew little of the advantages of peculiar positions, and perhaps disdained a wariness, that in an uncivilized age savours of cowardice. Prompt, impetuous, and disorderly, rude in their weapons and engines of war, and attacking their enemy rather with individual bravery than with the effect of their combined strength, they never fought a pitched battle with an English army judiciously commanded, without certain and ruinous defeat.

Baliol and his nobles experienced this military inferiority of their nation in the battle of Dunbar. When the English besieged the town, the whole force of Scotland collected on the steep chain of hills above it in battle array. The English general, the earl of Warenne, marched against them, and moving out of a disadvantageous position, the Scots mistook manœuvre for retreat, and, blowing their horns and howling with triumphant vociferation<sup>85</sup>, rushed from their advantageous position, eager to attack, lest their enemy should escape. But when the English, defiling out of a deep valley, formed rapidly into a line of fearless battle, and charged the too confident and now disordered Scotch, their discipline

<sup>85</sup> Hemingford says, *resonantes ululatibus*, enough to penetrate the infernal regions. p. 96.



cipline and array had their full effect. The Scottish army, though greatly outnumbering the English<sup>86</sup>, was totally defeated, with the loss of ten thousand men, and its principal chieftains<sup>87</sup>. Edward joined his army the following day. Dunbar surrendered. The castles of Rokesburg, Edinburgh, and Stirling, were as rapidly taken. Baliol, divested of his royal robes, and bearing a white rod in his hand, performed a humiliating penance, and resigned his kingdom and people to his liege lord Edward. The Scottish barons crowded, and among these Bruce, the future king, to re-swear fealty to the English sovereign<sup>88</sup>, who advanced triumphantly to Elgin; and the conquest of Scotland seemed complete. Baliol was sent by his stern antagonist a prisoner to the Tower of London; and the celebrated stone, the venerated palladium of Scotland, on which its kings had been always crowned<sup>89</sup>, was taken out of the country, and conveyed to Westminster. The chief castles of the southern parts were committed to the care of Englishmen, and wise measures were adopted to conciliate the nation. John de Warenne, earl of Surrey, was appointed governor of Scotland, with Hugh de Cressingham, treasurer, and left with a military force that was esteemed competent to retain the country in peaceful subordination. It is clear that Edward had now resolved

<sup>86</sup> Hemingford gives the numbers in this proportion; English, 1000 horse, 10,000 foot; Scotch, 1500 horse, and 40,000 foot.

<sup>87</sup> Lord Hailes remarks on this battle, "Upon almost the same ground, and in circumstances not dissimilar, Cromwell overcame the Scots, 3 Sept. 1650." p. 238.

<sup>88</sup> By their acts, copied in Hemingford, p. 101, the Scottish nobles, and among these the two Bruces and Comyn, declare "promettoms—qe nous lui servirons bien et loialement—Je serra feal et leal—Jeo demenk votre homme lige." See the Latin translations in Walsingham, pp. 32, 33.

<sup>89</sup> We have a description of a Scottish king's coronation in Fordun: He was seated on this stone; under his feet, the nobles, with bended knees, strewed their garments before it; an Highlander then kneeling before the throne, and bowing his head, saluted the king in Gaelic, by recapitulating all his genealogy up to Kenneth Mac Alpin, and thence to the visionary Fergus. vol. 3. p. 758. The Leonine rhymes in Fordun imply the tradition, that the Scotch would reign wherever that stone was placed.

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resolved to abolish the separate sovereignty of Scotland, and all his future measures were directed to this object. But this result was the consequence of that vindictive hostility which the Scottish government had deliberately begun. I do not dispute the right of the nation to emancipate itself from the feudal subordination into which Edward had urged or surprised it; but the moment they appealed to war, they subjected themselves to all the evils of its disasters; and the union on which Edward resolved after his victory, was the exertion of the right of a conqueror, who had been placed in that situation by the intemperance of the conquered. It may also be suggested, that the exertion for independence ought not to have been made by those who had sworn allegiance to Edward. The high-minded patriot, who had disdained such a fetter, kept his native rights undiminished. But if oaths be not individually binding, religion is a mockery, and morality but a crafty calculation.

That the administration of Edward's officers was deemed oppressive by the Scottish nation, need not be doubted. The English yoke had been forcibly imposed, and there must have been enough of high-spirited natives to resent the violence and to harass the obnoxious government. No country, accustomed to an independent sovereignty, can be speedily tranquillized under a new subjection, unless its inhabitants be so far civilized as to prefer peace and comfort to enterprise and hazard. Scotland has at all times had a high national feeling, and its mountainous chieftains have been distinguished for their habits of originality and independence. No country was less likely to be in that age an acquiescing appendage to another state. It is therefore not surprising, that parties, who are called bands of robbers, infested the highways, and invaded the English borders. A dislocation of authority so violent must have produced many sufferers, many  
indignant



indignant spirits, and many unprincipled adventurers. The measures put in action to repress them, would be inveighed against as tyranny, and, wherever they failed to intimidate, would multiply resistance.

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It was at this period that the celebrated person arose, whose actions have long been the favourite theme of his countrymen, and whose memory still lives, and deservedly, to fame, in their undiminished admiration. Patriotism is not indeed enjoined as a Christian duty, because it is too much connected with the violent passions, and too often with destruction, to be safely placed in a code of benevolence and peace. But human sympathy has always acknowledged it to be, when pure and genuine, a sublime principle; an heroic emotion, which great souls only truly feel; which must always be exerted with an individual responsibility and sacrifices that are the best suited to guard against its excesses, and to separate it from imposture; but which, when justly originating, and usefully acting, will ever win the admiration of mankind, and justify their praise. The fame of Wallace is therefore founded on some of the noblest springs of human actions<sup>90</sup>; and he violated no paramount duty in yielding to their impulse, for he was born with no allegiance to Edward. The English king had taken the Scottish crown by the right of conquest only. His rights thus originating from war, were still debatable by war. What the sword had extorted, the sword might yet dispute. A length of possession acquiesced in, the main foundation of the right of property, had not taken place; and

William  
Wallace.

<sup>90</sup> Barbour has done more than express the feeling of his own heart and country on such a principle; he has breathed the spirit of every enlightened mind, in this noble declamation:

A! fredome is a nobile thing.  
Fredome makes man to haiff liking.

Fredome all solace to man giffis.  
He levys at ese, that frely levys.  
A noble hart may haiff nan ese;  
Na ellys nocht that may him please,  
Gyff fredome failyhe —  
And suld think fredome mar to pryse  
Than all the gold in warld that is. p. 13.

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and Wallace was therefore at least as free to assert his national independence, as Edward could be to assail it.

The Scots, from the principle of his warfare, and the congeniality of their national feelings, have painted Wallace with features amiable and great. The English, too indignant at imputed treason to feel the justice of his motives, and too prejudiced by the representations of the authority they revered not to misconceive his actions, have transmitted to us his portrait distorted with every moral deformity. That he was a rebel and a public robber<sup>91</sup>, an incendiary, a murderer, and an apostate; more cruel than Herod, more flagitious than Nero; tormenting his prisoners, to make them dance in agony; embowelling infants, and consuming school-boys in flames<sup>92</sup>—are imputations and tales that may be construed to imply that he was as cordially hated and misrepresented by one country, as he was loved and panegyrised by the other. We may believe that he plundered, burnt and slaughtered, often without mercy; for such was the barbarous character of war in that still ferocious age. We find Edward described by his own chroniclers, as putting the inhabitants of Berwick to the sword on his first invasion<sup>93</sup>; and Wallace, as the native of a less civilized country, would hardly be more gentle. But we may perhaps fairly say, that his cruelties belong to his age, and that his noble spirit was his own. Europe and England have been too deeply indebted to similar characters and exertions, for us not to feel that Wallace is

<sup>91</sup> Thus Brunne,  
William Waleis is nomen  
That maister was of theves.—p. 329.  
And Walsingham calls him “publicus Latro,”  
but with a qualifying “ut fertur,” p. 35. Hem-  
mingford is not more charitable.

<sup>92</sup> Matt. West. 451. Walsingham, p. 36.  
Brunne, p. 339, says of him,  
That never had pite of Inglisman no weys.

And in the fulness of his belief, makes this  
moral exclamation on his capture :—

A ! Jhesu whan thou wille,  
How rightwis is thi mede !  
That of the wrong has gilt,  
The endying may thei drede.—p. 329.

<sup>93</sup> See note 83.



is entitled to all the praise which his countrymen have lavished on him. His actions, though he did not personally reap their reward, led the way to the independence of his country, at a period when its independence was believed by its natives to be its blessing. And, from the admirable character and attainments which now distinguish the Scottish nation, we may infer, that the four centuries of additional independence which the efforts of their Wallace contributed to occasion, were auspicious to the formation of a moral and intellectual capacity, peculiar, but excellent; strong, original, and deeply featured; but most auxiliary to the renown of the British nation, and to the improvement of human nature.

The authentic biography of Wallace can scarcely now be traced. Like all popular favourites, he has suffered from the fictions with which fond traditions have adorned and obscured him. That he was the younger son of a gentleman, seems sufficiently clear<sup>94</sup>; and the neighbourhood of Paisley, in Renfrewshire, has been presumed to be the place of his nativity<sup>95</sup>. That he was outlawed in his youth, for killing an English nobleman, is rather a popular opinion than an historical fact<sup>96</sup>. He appears to have been unknown, till he emerged to attack the English. Seven years was the short period of his exertions and his celebrity, and his actions are more fully

<sup>94</sup> Fordun says, that though he was thought ignobilis among the earls and nobles of his kingdom, yet that his parents shone in military honours; and that his elder brother was a knight, and left to his children a sufficient patrimony to maintain his rank. vol. 3. p. 979. This seems correct, because Brunne, the English poet, mentions Sir John de Wallace as his brother:

“Bot Sir Jon de Waleis taken was in a pleyn”—

He adds, that his head was cut off, and placed at London Bridge,

“Beside his brother the bigge William the Waleys.”—pp. 338, 9.

<sup>95</sup> Hailes, p. 245. Mr. Chalmers has exerted his investigating powers in his Caledonia, vol. 1. p. 577, but with no decisive success.

<sup>96</sup> Buchanan mentions it, l. 8. s. 18. But Lord Hailes suspects this to be derived from blind Harry.

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fully recorded in the chronicles of his enemies, scanty as their notices are, than in the memorials of his friends<sup>97</sup>.

The first achievement by which he roused the notice of his countrymen, was his killing the sheriff of Lanark, a brave and powerful man on the English side<sup>98</sup>. It was probably a guerilla exploit, successfully accomplished at the head of a few wanderers, whom he had collected; but it struck the imagination, and from that time the discontented and the patriotic eagerly joined him, and made him their leader. He was highly qualified for the great task he had undertaken. His personal appearance was prepossessing, his courage daring, his fortitude immovable, and his liberality unbounded<sup>99</sup>. Wherever he went, successes followed his paths. The English every where fell before him. Enlarging his objects with his triumphs, he called upon the men of rank to assert the cause of their country under his banners. If any Scottish noblemen refused, he seized and imprisoned them till they obeyed<sup>100</sup>. Collecting thus an active and imposing force, he attempted to drive the English even from the castles and fortresses, till his exploits reached the ears of Edward, and alarmed him to new exertions to resist his progress.

Edward could not believe the first tidings of a reverse so unexpected. He dispatched the bishop of Durham, for some of his prelates were warriors, to examine, and describe to him the truth. His envoy's report confirming the unwelcome news, as he was embarking to preserve Flanders from a French invasion, he

com-

<sup>97</sup> His metrical History, by Henry the Minstrel, who is stated to have been born blind, and to have gained his subsistence by reciting his histories before princes or great men, was composed in the middle of the fifteenth century. It is the works, as Lord Hailes says, "of an author, who either knew

not history or who meant to falsify it." p. 245. It has, however, the full merit of a production of the Muse, for it is poetical as well as fabulous.

<sup>98</sup> Fordun, vol. 4. p. 978.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid. p. 979.



commissioned his former general, the earl of Warenne, to go and chastise the bold revolt<sup>101</sup>. Fifty thousand English and Welsh were marched into Scotland, and its easy reconquest was confidently anticipated.

Wallace had now been raised to the command of all the Scottish forces<sup>102</sup>. He was besieging the castle of Dundee, when he heard that the English army was advancing to Stirling. Committing the prosecution of the siege to the citizens of the town, whom he charged to continue it under the penalty of losing life and limb if they were negligent<sup>103</sup>, he hastened to check the progress of the invaders.

The waters of the Forth spread between the English and the town of Stirling; a rising ground was beyond it. Wallace brought up all his army behind the hill, and there halted, watching the English. Warenne sent two dominicans, to offer peace: "Tell your masters", said Wallace, "we come not here for peace, but to fight—to revenge and to liberate our country: Let them approach when they please, they will find us ready to meet them to the very beard<sup>104</sup>." The Scotch consisted of 180 horse, and 40,000 foot; the English of 300 cavalry, and 50,000 infantry. The lofty answer of Wallace kindled the English pride. "They threaten us!" was the general exclamation: "Let us advance." "If you pass by the bridge," observed a friendly native<sup>105</sup>, "you are ruined; two only can pass it at a time; they flank us, and can attack with all their front: there is a ford, not far off, where sixty men may cross together; let me conduct you to it." His advice

<sup>101</sup> W. Heming. 122.

<sup>102</sup> Ib. 124.

<sup>103</sup> Ford. vol. 4. p. 980.

<sup>104</sup> W. Heming. p. 126. "Se ad pugnam non ad pacem venisse." Trivet. Ann. p. 307.

<sup>105</sup> Sir Richard Lundy was the knight

who gave this judicious counsel. Trivet. 307. Hemingford says, that some who were at the conflict had declared that the bridge was so narrow, that if the army had been passing it from dawn to eleven o'clock, not half would have got over. p. 128.

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advice was overruled<sup>106</sup>, and this presumption gave Wallace the brightest day of his short military life. The foreseen consequence occurred. Wallace waited quietly till as many of the English had passed as he was sure of overcoming. He sent a body of lancers to secure the foot of the bridge, and then charged, with speedy destruction, the whole first division that was before him. Their discomfiture threw Warenne into a panic, and he retreated to Berwick, as far as his horse could carry him, abandoning even the English border counties to his triumphant antagonist, who pursued his advantages with such vigorous determination, that he was soon before Carlisle<sup>107</sup>. He sent in a friar with his message, "William the Conqueror, my lord, commands you to surrender!" "Who is this conqueror?" inquired the governor; "William, whom you call Wallace<sup>108</sup>." His summons was defied; and, finding he could not carry it by assault, he prepared to retreat. The epithet annexed to his name shews the exultation of his countrymen at his successes, and his popular celebrity.

His country thus liberated, he assumed the title of the "Governor of Scotland in the name of king John" (Baliol<sup>109</sup>) and continued his exertions for perpetuating its independence. But Edward, returning from Flanders, prepared for a new campaign; and Wallace and Scotland soon felt the vigour of his military capacity.

The

<sup>106</sup> The treasurer, Hugh de Cressingham, whom the English historian calls a proud and pompous man, persuaded the old and more cautious Warenne to use the fatal bridge. He fell in the confusion. 127, 128. The Scots stripped off his skin, and divided it among them, from their hatred of him. Trivet. 307. Wals. 40.

<sup>107</sup> Hem. 129—131. Cressingham is described as rector of the church of Ruddeby, and prebend in several dioceses. p. 130. Five

thousand of the English infantry, besides cavalry, fell in the battle. p. 130.

<sup>108</sup> Hem. 132.

<sup>109</sup> In the *litteras protectorias* granted by Wallace to the convent of Hexeldsham, he and Andrew Murray are styled "*Duces exercitus regni Scotiæ nomine—Johannis regis Scotiæ.*" Hem. p. 135. This protection was an act of humanity unlike the barbarities imputed to him. p. 121. On his title of "*Custos regni Scotiæ,*" see Hailes 253. from Anderson's *Diplomata Scotiæ*, N° 44.



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1298.

The king directed his forces to be collected, but to attempt nothing beyond Berwick till he came. He made his arm of cavalry particularly strong ; three thousand select knights were on horses that were mailed, and four thousand on un-armed steeds. He desired no infantry but volunteers, and they are stated to have amounted to eighty thousand<sup>110</sup>. As he advanced beyond Edinburgh, he experienced those evils which might have taught the Scottish patriots their true military policy. The safety of Scotland against England, at that time, lay in the imperfect state of her agriculture, in her scattered population, and in the hardy frugality of her inhabitants, content with the necessities of life, and seeking and possessing no superfluities. In such a country, the invading army that did not carry with it the supplies for its campaigns, must waste in disease and famine, if the retiring patriots should destroy all resources in its line of march. Aware of this danger, Edward had directed a fleet of victuallers to meet him in the Frith of Forth. Adverse winds detained them at Berwick, and the English army began to pine in want and malady. At length, a few vessels arrived with wine ; and, as his Welsh troops were dying in great numbers, he distributed part to refresh them. They became intoxicated and mutinous. The English cavalry charged them, and they withdrew from the main body. It was reported to Edward, that they were going over to the Scots. His answer displayed his usual firmness ; “ I care not ; let my enemies join my enemies, I will chastise them all<sup>111</sup>.” The famine increased, and the King resolved to retreat to Edinburgh. As he was making dispositions for this purpose, a friendly visitor discovered to him, that Wallace and the Scottish army were only a few miles off, in the forest of Falkirk ; that they had heard of Edward’s determination to fall back, and had rapidly advanced, projecting to surprise

<sup>110</sup> Heming, 159.<sup>111</sup> Ibid. 161.

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surprise his camp on the night of the following day. Delighted at their vicinity, Edward commanded his troops to arm, without revealing his secret information, and marched immediately towards Falkirk, every one wondering at his change of mind. In the moor near Linlithgow he halted them for the night. They rested on the bare earth, their shields their pillows, their armour their bed, and their horses held, unbaited, near them<sup>112</sup>. As the king was sleeping, his war-horse struck his side with his hoof, and broke two of his ribs. An alarm spread, that the King was hurt; treason was suspected and charged; and a panic might have dispersed the English army, if Edward, subduing his sensations of pain, had not placed himself in his saddle, and reassured his troops by his presence<sup>113</sup>. At dawn they marched straight to Falkirk, and beheld the Scottish army. The King wished to refresh his troops with food, but was reminded, that only a little brook separated the two armies. He saw the judgment of the remark, and he ordered the attack<sup>114</sup>.

Wallace formed his men into four circular bodies, facing outwards, with their lances held obliquely, and with archers in their intervals. A peat morass was in his front, and he caused a row of stakes, tied by ropes, to be fastened in the ground, as a protection from the English cavalry. Behind these he planted his infantry, with this short address; "I have brought you to the ring, dance well if you know how"<sup>115</sup>.

Edward formed his troops into three divisions. The first advanced straight forwards to the enemy, ignorant of the morass; but meeting with

<sup>112</sup> Heming. 162.

<sup>113</sup> Heming. 163. Wals. 42.

<sup>114</sup> Hem. 163. Wals. 42. That the Welsh surprising, as the cause of the Scotch had shunned the battle has been stated, and is not been so recently their own. Brunne says

The Walsch folk, that tide,

Did nouthur ille no gode;

They held tham alle bi side;

Opon a hille thei stode.—p. 306.

<sup>115</sup> "I have brought you to the ryng hop, or be active. See Lord Hailes's note on this gif ye kun." Wals. 43. "Hop," that is, dance, speech, p. 258.



with it, they marched round it on the west. The bishop of Durham, with thirty-six banners, led the second line, and, aware of the peat-moss, skirted it on the east. This division, eager to have the first blow, marched faster than the Bishop liked, who thought it better to wait for the support of the other line. "It is not for you to teach us war," cried an ardent knight, who shared the command; "To your mass, Bishop!" and led his willing troops into the conflict with the first circle of the Scots, while the van division was also hastening into action. The Scottish cavalry gave way before the impetuosity of the charge, and fled; but a few of the knights joined the circles of the infantry, to direct their movements. The northern bowmen, from the forest of Selkirk, fought manfully, but were soon destroyed. The condensed wood of the Scottish lancers, with their obliquely protruded weapons, was then full before the English knights, and steadily kept them at bay. In vain they essayed to break into the firm array; the foremost, with unavailing bravery, perished on the lances, as Wallace had foreseen; and the repulse of the English chivalry did credit to the military judgment of the patriot. His circles of infantry were impenetrable. But the English commanders were persevering and expert: they observed that the Scottish array, though so effective for defence, was, from that very circumstance, incompetent to attack: these circles of men were in fact but so many immoveable fortresses; and they resolved to assail them as such. The place abounded with large stones. The English generals ordered up their cross-bowmen and machines, and the stones and arrows were poured, without remission, on the front men of the circumferences, till so many perished, that the rest, astonished and overwhelmed, fell back on the interior. At this critical moment the English cavalry burst in, followed by their foot, before the Scottish officers could re-form their broken rings, which this movement threw into irretrievable confusion

confusion. Wallace had made no provision for this possibility, or his materials were too unmanageable for discipline. Escape only was the object of the one party, and destruction, little resisted, of the other. The English converted their attack into a pursuit so disastrous to Scotland, that many thousands<sup>116</sup> of her bravest defenders were destroyed. The pressure of famine prevented Edward from profiting by his great victory. The ships were still detained by the adverse winds. Fifteen days he remained in the camp, almost without food; and, instead of entering Galway, was at last obliged to fall back to Carlisle<sup>117</sup>.

Wallace had, by his own intrepid and unyielding spirit, roused the decaying energies of his countrymen. When both the Bruces, and Baliol, and the Scottish parliament, had given up the patriot cause, he had set the example of a courageous fortitude, and, by twice expelling their English masters, had shewn a possibility of victory, which revived the submitting nobles from their despondency. But the aristocracy of his country was unworthy of its hero. The proud lairds and chieftains cavilled at the inferiority of his birth. His right of command was disputed; and dissensions in the Scottish camp are stated to have preceded the battle of Falkirk. Be this fable or truth<sup>118</sup>, it is clear that he was deserted after this defeat—we may add, unjustly deserted. That Wallace had formed a safer plan of operations, is evident from the information which made Edward advance. But the decision and rapidity of the English king having suddenly brought his army before the Scottish lines, the

<sup>116</sup> Heming. p. 165. Wals. 43. Hailes remarks the different estimation of the Scottish loss. Walsingham says 60,000. Hemingford, who writes with much particular knowledge, 50,000. M. West. in one place, p. 411, has 40,000; in another, p. 446, 60,000.—M. West. swells the army of Wallace to 200,000, p. 411; and Hemingford to

300,000, p. 165. Neither of these numbers seem probable ones. Trivet's account is more rational; he says, "It was thought by many that above 20,000 Scots perished." Ann. p. 313.

<sup>117</sup> Hem. 167.

<sup>118</sup> See Hailes, 254 & 262.



the momentous battle became inevitable. The defeat, the natural result of superior discipline and equipment, well commanded, though not fairly imputable to any fault in Wallace, destroyed his future influence among the selfish great. Appointing Bruce and others the guardians of Scotland, they protracted a defensive struggle till 1303<sup>119</sup>, when Edward, having made peace with France, was enabled to pour his undivided forces into Scotland.

The greatest resistance which he experienced in the campaign, was at the siege of Stirling. It required all the exertion of his besieging skill. Ninety days had passed with no signs of surrender. He became but the more determined to take it. First in every attack, he was aimed at from a balista, and the dart pierced his robe. Repetitions of the same danger induced his courtiers to advise him to expose himself less. His answer was a quotation from the Psalms, expressing his reliance on Providence, and that he feared not what man could do. On a following day, riding unarmed near the walls, the Scots discharged an immense stone, with such exactness that it struck his horse's feet, and he fell with the King. His knights ran to extricate him, gently upbraiding his carelessness of his own safety, and offering to expose themselves to every danger, instead of him. The King declared that he would not separate himself from them. He increased the power of his machines, and the size of their projectiles. Seeing his English run to pick up the arrows discharged from the castle, which had fallen short, he called them back, "If you do not take them up," he remarked, "they will think that they cannot throw their missile weapons at all near you, and they will be discouraged; but if you collect them, they will perceive that a little addition of force will send them among you, and you will suffer from the discovery."

At

<sup>119</sup> For the intermediate incidents, see Hailes, 263—276.

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At last the governor, Sir William Oliphant, and others, came from the castle barefoot, ungirded, with ashes on their heads, and ropes on their necks and in their hands, imploring his grace. He told them he would not receive them into his favour; they must surrender to his pleasure. They declared they did so—"My pleasure is," exclaimed the king, "that you be drawn and hanged." Sir William fell on the earth, and, with every expression of grief, threw himself on his mercy. The King turned to the companions of the governor, "And what do you expect?" They declared, with lamentation, that they submitted themselves to his will. The King, affected by their emotions, inclined a little aside, and saw his own friends bedewed with generous tears; he permitted the noble sympathy to spread in part to himself; he gave them their lives, but he ordered their imprisonment<sup>120</sup>.

After this success, he penetrated to Caithness, and the country was reconquered. Bruce surrendered himself to the English; so did Comyn, and his followers. The Scottish chieftains all gave up the contest, except Wallace, who had been animating the previous warfare. He was invited to imitate them, and put himself under the royal grace<sup>121</sup>. His unbroken spirit resolutely refused, and he retired to a place of concealment. But his rejection of the offers of pardon and peace increased Edward's resentment to inveteracy; he felt his conquest to be insecure while Wallace lived, and he put in motion many parties to hunt out his retreat<sup>122</sup>. From his enemies the persecuted patriot might seclude himself; but his retirement was penetrable by deceitful friends. One of these, directed by a  
faithless

<sup>120</sup> Matt. Westm. 447—449.

<sup>121</sup> "Si lui semble que bon soit." The Grant of amnesty to Comyn and his friends is among the Placita Parliam. p. 212. It contains this clause in favour of Wallace, p. 213.

<sup>122</sup> That Wallace was diligently sought

after by Edward, appears from the Parliamentary document, which states, that the king released Ralph of Haliburton, to go to Scotland and aid the other men, who were watching there, to catch Wallace. 1 Plac. Parl. 177.



# HISTORY OF ENGLAND

CHAP.

II.

REIGN OF  
EDWARD I.

Death of  
Wallace.

faithless domestic, betrayed him into the hands of Edward<sup>123</sup>. Age had now chilled in that King all the generous feelings that once mitigated his resentments. He saw in Wallace nothing but an irreconcilable adversary, and his vindictive spirit had not the magnanimity to pardon. Wallace was arraigned at Westminster as a traitor. His defence was complete—he had never sworn allegiance to Edward; he was born with none; he had never acquiesced in his authority; he could not be a traitor to him<sup>124</sup>. But the English judges adopted the feelings of their sovereign. He was found guilty of treason—hanged—drawn—and quartered. His head was exposed on London Bridge, and his divided limbs sent to intimidate Scotland. Edward obtained the wretched gratification of destroying his noble enemy; but his cruelty has only increased the celebrity of Wallace, and indelibly blotted his own<sup>125</sup>.

By

<sup>123</sup> Fordun, p. 996.—Brunner's version of caption, which is worthy of notice, as the Langtoft's Chronicle gives this account of his narration of a contemporary:

Sir Jon of Menetest served William so neih,  
He tok him whan he wend lest, on nyght his leman bi.  
That was thorght treson of Jak Schort his man,  
He was the encheson that Sir Jon so him nam.  
Jak brother had he slayn, the Waleis that is said,  
'The more Jak was fayn to do William that braid.—p. 329.

<sup>124</sup> As every thing relating to so great a man is interesting, I will imitate Lord Hailes in quoting the following from Stow's Chronicle, p. 209:—"William Wales—was brought to London with great numbers of men and women wondring upon him. He was lodged in the house of William Delect, a citizen of London, in Fanchurch-street. On the morrow, being the even of St. Bartholomew, he was brought on horsebacke to Westminster, John Segreve and Geffrey Knight, the major, sheriffes and aldermen of London, and many other, both on horsebacke and on foote, accompanying him; and in the great hall at Westminster, he being

placed on the south bench, crowned with laurel, for that he had said in times past, that he ought to beare a crowne in that hall, as it was comonly reported, and being appeached for a traytor, by Sir Peter Mallorie the king's justice, hee answered that hee never was a traytor to the king of England."

<sup>125</sup> Wals. 61. M. West. 451.—The popular affection for Wallace is strikingly shewn by the many local traditionary remembrances of him, which are still preserved in Scotland. The hills, the houses, the castles, and the glens, which he frequented; the stones on which he sat; the tree in which he was secreted; the rock from which he plunged into

PART  
III.  
REIGN OF  
EDWARD I.

By the submission of the chiefs, and by the death of Wallace, the subjection of Scotland seemed completed, and Edward proceeded to the settlement of its administration. In a parliament at Westminster, attended by deputies from Scotland, the great state officers and sheriffs, and the keepers of its castles, were appointed. The usage of Scot and Bret laws was abolished. The king's lieutenant was directed to assemble a Scottish council, to read over the laws of their king David, and the subsequent additions, and to correct such as were evidently against God and reason<sup>126</sup>.

Edward had thus attained the full gratification of his policy. Scotland was now his own; all had submitted. But the brilliant prospects of ambition are rarely permanent. Before a few months elapsed, the sceptre that appeared to be so securely grasped, was again contested, and at last vanished from the hands of his successor. The immediate causes of this unexpected revolution, are connected with a catastrophe, which has not yet been satisfactorily elucidated.

Baliol's sister left a son, named John Comyn, who had been made the guardian of Scotland, and leader of her armies against Edward. He was the representative of the rights of Baliol, which had been decreed to be antecedent to those of Bruce. The claims of Bruce had descended to his grandson, Robert Bruce; and thus Comyn and Robert Bruce stood in the same competition of right to the crown of Scotland, which their ancestors Baliol and the first Bruce had maintained. Both had submitted to Edward.

1306.  
Bruce  
assassinates  
Comyn.

Suddenly it was announced to the world, that Bruce had assassinated Comyn, at Dumfries, before the great altar in the convent  
of

into the sea; the bridge which he crossed; the forest to which he withdrew; the foaming cascade behind which he was once screened; the barn in which he was taken; and the lake into which, after he was overpowered,

he hurled his sword—are still fondly pointed out. Mr. Ker has collected the notices of these traditions in his *History of Robert the Bruce*, vol. 1. pp. 125—132.

<sup>126</sup> Plac. Parl. 268.



of the Franciscans. That the most distinguished king of Scotland should commit sacrilege and murder, is an act so abhorrent to moral feeling, that it has naturally engaged his countrymen to discover, if possible, some honourable motives to palliate the crime. It will be most impartial, in the present history, to state the principal circumstances of the transaction, as narrated by the Scottish historian; and then to subjoin the English accounts.

CHAP.  
II.  
REIGN OF  
EDWARD I.

According to Fordun, Bruce had begun a negociation with Comyn to revive the Scottish throne; and they had agreed, that Bruce should be the king, and that Comyn's possessions should be guaranteed and increased; when Comyn communicated the secret plan to the English government. Alarmed at the information, Edward meditated the destruction of Bruce, then at his court; when the earl of Gloucester, favouring the Scottish prince, sent him a piece of money and a pair of spurs, with this enigmatical message, "My master returns what you yesterday lent him." Bruce, whose mind, if pursuing such plans, must have been always in alarm, conjectured, on seeing the spurs, that his escape was counselled, and, giving the messenger the money, he secretly got to his horse, and rode off immediately to Scotland. On the marches he met a courier, on whom he found his own sealed treaty with Comyn, which this betraying friend was sending to Edward. Bruce, arriving at Dumfries, sent for Comyn to the monastery, and charged him with his perfidy: "You lie!" said Comyn, and Bruce immediately stabbed him. He fell, and was carried behind the altar. The monks inquiring if he thought he should survive, he answered, "I may." The friends of Bruce hearing this possibility, determined to preclude it, and dispatched him<sup>127</sup>.

The

<sup>127</sup> Hearne's Fordun, vol. 4. pp. 991—996. Barbour states the previous negociation between Comyn and Bruce, Buke 1. p. 23. He

then adds a long digression on treason, introducing it with

Bot off all things wa worth tresoune!  
For thair is nothir duk ne baroune

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III.REIGN OF  
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The English historians omit the circumstances of the escape of Bruce; but state him to have invited his rival to the church of the Franciscans, to have reproached him for accusing him to Edward, according to one<sup>128</sup>, or for refusing to throw off the English yoke, according to others<sup>129</sup>. There is no substantial difference between any of the authorities, on the main facts of the catastrophe. They all agree that Bruce convened the meeting; that he upbraided Comyn, and at last stabbed him; and that Bruce's friends, finding him not killed, completed the assassination. Thus agreeing on the principal fact, their variations as to the preceding conversation are unimportant, and indeed not irreconcilable. Bruce may have reprimanded him for discovering his secret purposes to Edward, may have urged him to support his plans, and may have received the lie to some of his assertions. On every supposition, it was still the destruction of a competitor by the person who was to be most benefited by the crime; and from this suspicious atrocity the memory of Bruce cannot be vindicated.

Some of Comyn's relations were also destroyed. The Scots hearing of the event, anxious for their liberty, took arms in behalf of Bruce. The English justiciaries were besieged, and surrendered. Bruce a few weeks afterwards procured himself to be crowned king of Scotland<sup>130</sup>, and exerted himself in spreading through the

Bruce  
procures  
himself to  
be crowned.

Na erle na prynce na kyng off mycht,  
Thoch he be nivir sa wyse a wicht,  
For wyt worschip price na renoun,  
That ivir may wauch hym with tresoune.

p. 24.

He mentions Comyn's sending the indenture to Edward, p. 27; but he makes the English king shew it to Bruce, who asks a respite till the next day, p. 29. and in the mean time escapes. He states him to have killed Comyn, but does not describe their interview. Buke 2. p. 34.

<sup>128</sup> Hemingford, p. 219.

<sup>129</sup> Matt. Westm. p. 455. Wals. 62. And Brunne's Langtoft is to the same purport, p. 330. Trivet states, that Bruce, aspiring to the crown, killed Comyn, "quia suæ prodiosæ factione noluit assentire." p. 342.

<sup>130</sup> He killed Comyn 10 Feb. 1306; he was crowned 25 March 1306. Heming. 220. So ardent was Scottish patriotism for his enterprise, that the countess of Buchan left her husband to go to crown him: She went to represent her brother, whose office it was, but who was detained in England. Trivet. 342.



the country the flames of revolt; and, though withstood by the counteraction of the powerful and indignant family of the Comyns, and by many of the nobles, who preferred peace to turbulence and devastation, yet the insurrectionary movements spread, and Edward, who was now gradually sinking to the grave, amid the diseases of a decaying constitution<sup>131</sup>, was alarmed with the tidings, that the country, which he had so long struggled to incorporate with his own, was again emancipating itself from his authority.

Indignant and disquieted, he resolved to march an army into Scotland, which should extirpate all resistance. To provide a force impressive from its rank and splendour, and to engage the hearts of his own subjects in the expedition, he caused it to be proclaimed through England, that all who were under legal obligation to become knights, and had competent means, should assemble at Westminster on Whitsuntide, and that they would be there furnished with every requisite from the king's wardrobe, except the trappings of their horses. Three hundred youths, the sons of earls, barons and knights, attended; and purple robes, fine linen garments, and mantles woven with gold, were liberally distributed. The royal palace, though spacious, was not sufficient to hold the vast crowds who poured in; and the Temple and its gardens were also appropriated to entertain them. Its apple-trees were cut down, its walls laid prostrate, and tents and booths were erected, in which the young knights appeared in their dresses glistening with gold. Every night, as many as the Temple church would hold, performed their vigils in it. But the prince of Wales, by his father's command, passed his vigils in the abbey of Westminster. There, such was the clangor of the trumpets and clarions, such the emulous acclamations, that the chanting of the choir was drowned in

Edward's  
splendid  
military  
assembly at  
Westminster.

<sup>131</sup> He was unable to ride on horseback, from a weakness in his lower limbs, Triv. 342; and he was afflicted with a dysentery.

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REIGN OF  
EDWARD I.

in the general exultation. On the following day, the king invested his son with the military belt, and gave him the dutchy of Aquitain. The prince went with his new honours to the abbey, to confer the same dignity of knighthood on his associates; but so great was the pressure towards the high altar, to behold the ceremony, that two knights were killed, and many fainted, though each had at least three others to conduct and defend him. The crowd being at last repressed and divided by strong war horses, the prince was enabled to knight his friends. Two swans were then brought in with great pomp, decorated with golden nets and gilt reeds, and placed before the king. On seeing these, the sovereign vowed a vow to the God of heaven, and to the swans, That he would go to Scotland, and, living or dead, avenge the death of Comyn, and the broken faith of the Scots; adjuring the prince and his nobles, by their fealty to him, that if he should die on his journey to it, they would carry his body into the country, and never bury it, till the prince had established his dominion over it in victory and triumph<sup>132</sup>. The great assembly eagerly gave their pledge; and one of the most powerful armaments that Edward had ever formed, was conducted to the North.

Against this pomp and power of ancient chivalry, what had Bruce to oppose? Only a few noble friends<sup>133</sup>, the hearts of an undisciplined people, and his own unwearied spirit. But these were unequal to compete with the English resolution and resources. He attempted an enterprise against Perth, and made his men put their

<sup>132</sup> We owe the description of this scene, so expressive of the manners of the day, to Matt. Westm. 457, 458. Trevet says, that on this day, as the King sat at table, surrounded with the new knights, a multitude of minstrels came in to induce the knights to vow some feat of arms *before the swan*. After mentioning the king's oath, he states, that the prince vowed

never to rest two nights in any one place till he had reached Scotland, that he might fulfil his father's wishes. He adds, "The vows of the other knights are not recollected." p. 343.

<sup>133</sup> The friends of Bruce are enumerated, by Lord Hailes, in his Annals, vol. 2. and Mr. Pinkerton, in a note to his edition of Barbour's Bruce, vol. 1. p. 43.



their shirts over their armour, to disguise them; but he was defeated, three times unhorsed, and nearly taken prisoner<sup>134</sup>. This early discomfiture precluded all future hope. He withdrew, with a few patriots, to the Grampian Hills, abandoned by his countrymen, leading the life of outlaws, subsisting on flesh and water, and not daring to appear on the plains<sup>135</sup>. They lived among the mountains, making their shoes of skins, till their sufferings compelled them to venture to Aberdeen. Here the king's brother, Neil, brought his queen, and some other fair ladies, the faithful wives of his friends, who nobly came to share the hardships, and to soften the distresses of their husbands<sup>136</sup>.

The king and his fellow exiles continued here till their residence became known to the English, who, hearing of it, projected to surprise him. But he watched the motions of their armed force, and, as it was folly to fight them, he mounted the ladies on horseback, and they all escaped back to the mountains. Their living here

CHAP.  
II.  
REIGN OF  
EDWARD I.

Bruce's  
exile, and  
sufferings.

<sup>134</sup> Matt. Westm. 459. Trev. 344.—Barbour describes the battle at length, Buke 2. pp. 46—52. In the press of the struggle, he says of Bruce,

And quhen the king his folk has sene  
Begyn to faile, for proper tene,  
Hys assenyhe gan he cry  
And in the stour so hardyly—  
“ On thaim, on thaim! thai feble fast;  
“ This bargaine nevir may langar last.”  
And with that word sa wilfully  
He dang on, and sa hardely,  
That quha had sene hym in that fycht  
Suld hald hym for a douchty knyght.

<sup>135</sup> Barbour says, that the king and his companions

As utelaufs went mony day,  
Dreand in the mounth their payne;  
Eyte flesch and drank water syne.  
He durst not to the planys ga  
For all the cummownys went him fra:

That for their liff war full fayn  
To pass to the Inglis pes agayn.  
Sa fayrs ay cummounly,  
In cummownys may nane affy.

Buke 2. p. 55.

<sup>136</sup> Barbour, pp. 55, 56. He does not omit a just sentiment of commendation;

Ilkane fer luff off thair husband;  
That for leyle luff and loawte  
Wald pertenerys off thair paynys be.—  
For luff is off sa mekill mycht  
That it all paynys maks licht.  
And mony tyme mase tender wycht  
Of swilk strenthes and swilk mycht  
That thai may mekill paynys endur  
And forsakis nane aventur  
That ever may fall, withthy that thai  
Thairthrow succur thair luffys may.

p. 56.

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III.  
REIGN OF  
EDWARD I.

here is romantically described. The baron of Douglas procured them venison, for they had no other meat, and with his own hands made gins and nets to take salmons, trouts and eels, for their repast; the rest foraged about for other necessities: and thus they subsisted till they reached Loch Tay<sup>137</sup>. But the nephew of Comyn resided in these parts, and, hearing of the king's approach, assembled his clan, with their battle-axes, sought out the royal party, attacked, and dispersed it<sup>138</sup>. The desperate valour of Bruce deterred a pursuit. His vindictive antagonist in vain lamented the backwardness of his men<sup>139</sup>. Bruce escaped unwounded.

This disaster again drove them to the mountains. Bruce strove to cheer the minds of his friends. But the strength of the ladies soon began to fail. Their feelings were expressed by the earl of Athol, who told the king, that they were living in such hourly dread, so worn with fatigue and watchings, and so affected by cold and wet, and want of proper food, that their lives began to be in danger. Bruce saw the truth of the representation, and it was agreed that the ladies should be lodged in secure places. An affectionate parting took place, and the queen and her friends were conducted by Neil, the king's brother, to the castle of Kildrummy, about thirty miles west of Aberdeen<sup>140</sup>.

The king now driven to the necessity of stricter concealment,  
and

<sup>137</sup> Barbour, pp. 57—59.

<sup>138</sup> Barb. Buke 3. pp. 63—65. Ford. p. 999. This affair happened on 11 Aug. at Dalry, or the King's Field. Hailes, p. 7.

<sup>139</sup> His lamentation is important, for the evidence it affords, that in Barbour's time traditions of Gaul the son of Morni, and of Fingal, were prevalent in Scotland:

He said, "Methink Martheokys son  
Rycht as Gol Mak Morn was won,  
To haiff fra Fyngal hys mengye,  
Rycht swa all hys fra us has he."

Buke 3. p. 66.

<sup>140</sup> Barbour, 75—77. He thus describes their separation—

The queyne and all hyr cumpany  
Lap on thair horss, and furth thai far.  
Men mycht haiff sene, quha had bene thar,  
At leve takyng the ladyis gret,  
And mak thair face with ters wet:  
And knychts, for thair luffs sak,  
Bath sich and wep and murnyng mak.  
Thai kyssit thair luffs, at thair partyng.

p. 77.



and all their horses having been given to accommodate the female travellers, he wandered on foot, with his remaining friends, among the rocky retreats. The winter was now approaching, the country was full of enemies, and the rains made it impossible to lie all night on the hills. It was indispensable to seek a fit shelter. He resolved to go to Kintyre, the southern peninsula of Argyle. With this view they travelled to Loch Lomond; but this extensive and beautiful water stopped their progress. It is above twenty miles in length, and there was no boat. They proceeded along its banks, till the baron Douglas observed a small vessel sunk under the waves. They drew it out; it would only hold three men. The king and Douglas got into it, with another, who rowed them over. It went back for the rest, and they passed in it two at a time; while those swam, who could. This mode of ferrying occupied them a day and a night. The king strove to amuse his companions in misfortune by reading to them a romance<sup>141</sup>. They divided into two parties, to procure food. They pervaded the hills and woods about, with little success; but their blowing of their horns, to keep themselves together, was heard by the earl of Lennox, one of the few nobles who had espoused the royal cause, but who had believed the king to have perished at Methven. Rejoiced to find that Bruce lived, he hastened eagerly to the height where he was. The king affectionately welcomed him, and mutual embraces and tears displayed the tender sympathies with which, in their common lot of exile and poverty, they hailed each other's preservation, and lamented their sufferings<sup>142</sup>.

The

<sup>141</sup> Barb. 78—81.

<sup>142</sup> Barb. 84. This author's feelings do credit to his heart. He justifies the tender meeting of his noble exiles, by saying,

That mekill joy or yheit pité  
May ger men sua amowyt be  
That wattir fra the hart will ryss  
And weyt the eyne on syc a wyss—

After mentioning the emotions of anger, he adds,

Bot for pité I trow gretyng  
Be na thing bot ane opynnyng  
Off hart, that schawis the tendirness  
Off rewth that in it closyt is.

p. 84.

The earl shared with them his provisions. They related to each other the hardships and dangers they had encountered, and journeyed to the sea side. The king found the vessels, which his brother had provided, and, embarking in them, was rowed by the isle of Bute, to the promontory of Kintyre. Angus of the isles was its laird. He received Bruce with hospitable duty, and gave him his castle of Dunavarty for his residence. But Bruce had experienced too much desertion and treachery, to repose a confidence unlimited<sup>143</sup>; he gratefully thanked Angus for his kindness, staid three days in his fortress, and then sailed to Rachlin, an island on the north-east coast of Ireland<sup>144</sup>, where he was secure of being beyond the persecution of his enemies. The simple inhabitants, unused to the sight of armed men, fled at his arrival into their strongest defences, with their women and cattle. Bruce treated friendly with them. He assured them the safe enjoyment of their possessions; and they submitted to him as their lord, and promised to furnish him daily with food for three hundred men. Pleased with their integrity and the security of the place, he remained there all the winter<sup>145</sup>.

Edward's unremitted thirst of vengeance pursued the hapless fugitives. He commanded all the people of Scotland to search for those who had borne arms against the English government, and to apprehend them, dead or alive. And he procured it to be enacted, that those who were at the slaughter of Comyn, or knowingly harboured the guilty persons, should be drawn and hanged<sup>146</sup>. This ordinance produced the capture of Bruce's queen.

When

<sup>143</sup> He wis dredand for tresoun ay,  
And tharefor as ik hard men say,  
He traistyt in nane sekyrly,  
Till that he knew hym uterly.  
Bot quhat kyndred, that evir he had,  
Fayr cuntenance to thaim he mad.

p. 89.

<sup>144</sup> Hailes, vol. 2. p. 7. Mr. Pinkerton refers, for a description of this island and Bruce's castle, to Hamilton's Observations on the North of Ireland.—Barb. 90.

<sup>145</sup> Barb 92, 93.

<sup>146</sup> Hailes' Ann. p. 8.



When Bruce, on his precipitate coronation, remarked to her, “Yesterday we were called earl and countess, but now we shall be addressed as king and queen,” she is stated to have answered, “You may be a summer king, but perhaps will not be a winter king<sup>147</sup>.” This remark was so natural to a person of any reflection, in her circumstances, that it may have been expressed without either asperity or aversion. But the English annalist adds to it upbraidings for his perjury, and that Bruce in resentment banished her. This resembles an enemy’s exaggeration, and is not accordant with the picture drawn by Barbour. He however admits, that she had not the fortitude to endure the terrors of a siege<sup>148</sup>, but quitted Kildrummy Castle when it was in danger of being attacked, and took refuge in the sanctuary of St. Duthac, at Tain on the Dornock Frith. But this was in the territories of the earl of Ross, and, dreading the penalties of the English ordinance, he took her from her asylum, and delivered her to the English<sup>149</sup>. Their male companions were executed as traitors, and the ladies imprisoned. The unknighly conduct of treating the queen as a prisoner, is but another instance, that age had not allayed the implacability of Edward’s temper<sup>150</sup>.

The

<sup>147</sup> Matt. Westm. 456.

<sup>148</sup> The queen and als dam Margery  
Hyr dochtyr—  
That wald on na wyss langar ly  
In castell off Kyldromy  
To byd a sege, ar rydin raith  
With knychts and squyers bath  
Throw Ross rycht to the gyrrh of Tayne.  
Barb. 99.

<sup>149</sup> Ford. 999.

Bot that trawaile thai maid in wayne,  
For thai of Ross that wald not ber  
For thaim na blayme, na yeit danger  
Out off the gyrrh hame all has tayne  
And syne thaim evirilkane

Rycht intill Ingland, to the king  
That gert draw all the men and hing  
And put the ladyis in presoune,  
Sum intill castell, sum in dungeoun.

Barb. 99.

<sup>150</sup> Lord Hailes’ note will fully explain her situation in England. “The directions given for her entertainment are preserved in the *Fœdera*, t. 2. p. 1013. She was to be conveyed to the manor of Brustewick; to have a waiting woman and a maid servant, advanced in life, sedate, and of good conversation; a butler, two men servants, and a footboy for her chamber, sober and not riotous, to make her bed; three greyhounds when

PART  
III.  
REIGN OF  
EDWARD I.

The countess of Buchan, who had crowned Bruce, was also taken. Edward's observation as to her punishment, announces the same dark spirit of revenge, refining upon its cruelty: "As she has not struck with the sword, she shall not perish by the sword; but for her lawless conspiracy, she shall be shut up in a stone and iron chamber, circular as the crown she gave; and at Berwick she shall be suspended in the open air, a spectacle to travellers, and for her everlasting infamy<sup>151</sup>." It is useful to record such actions; for, what can more forcibly persuade us to extinguish the first impulses of revenge, than to see the meannesses to which its gratification can degrade even great and princely characters.

The castle of Kildrummy was soon besieged by the English forces. It was as vigorously defended as attacked. But 'a false loundane, Hosbarne to name' set fire to its great hall, full of corn. The flames spread over the castle. The English saw the mischief, and made an assault. The spirit of the garrison, and the fury of the flames, compelled them to desist that night; but in the next morning they prepared to assail it again. It was then surrendered, with Neil the brother of Bruce, who was carried to Berwick, and unrelentingly hanged and beheaded<sup>152</sup>. Sir Christopher Seaton, who had married Bruce's sister, and another Seaton, his kinsman, were captured in a different castle, and drawn, hanged, and beheaded<sup>153</sup>. The earl of Athol, dreading a similar fate, tried to escape by sea, but adverse winds drove him back to the fatal shore. What can we say of Edward, when we read in a contemporary English annalist, who seems to admire his actions, that, though the king was languishing at that time in the severe disease which in a few months consigned him to the tomb, yet, on hearing of Athol's capture, he declared, that the news assuaged his pains. As the

when she inclined to hunt; venison, fish, and the fairest house in the manor." p. 9.

<sup>151</sup> Matt. Westm. 460.

<sup>152</sup> Barb. 100—103. Fordun, p. 1000. M. Westm. 462.

<sup>153</sup> M. Westm. 461.



the earl claimed a royal descent, some of the courtiers around Edward's bed remarked, that it would be indecent to sentence him like the rest. The distinction, meant perhaps to suggest a feeling of mercy to the dying king, only produced this unforgiving answer; "If his rank be higher, it makes his fault the greater; and since he is more exalted than the other parricides in blood, he shall be hanged in a loftier elevation for his crime." In consideration of his descent, he was not drawn, but he was suspended fifty feet from the ground. He was taken down half alive; a fierce fire was kindled in his presence, for the destruction of his corpse; he was then beheaded, his body burnt, and his head fixed on London Bridge, higher than usual, for his regal lineage<sup>154</sup>. Simon Fraser was as mercilessly treated. He had three times rescued and remounted Bruce at the battle of Methven<sup>155</sup>; an irremissible offence. He was so distinguished a warrior, that his countrymen, prisoners in England, declared that he would never be either conquered or taken, and that Scotland could not be subdued while he was alive. One, in the Tower of London, was so enthusiastic an admirer, as to lay a wager of his own head, with the king, that Fraser would never be his captive. But the English perseverance and power at last apprehended him. The king cruelly exacted from his panegyricising friend, the forfeiture of the life he had lost; and Fraser was made to suffer the same kind of death with his patriotic associates. His head was placed on a lance at London Bridge, near the remains of Wallace, his unfortunate friend<sup>156</sup>. The only palliation that can be offered for Edward is, that most of these men had sworn their fealty to him, and had violated their oaths. But if they merited punishment by their perfidy, yet nothing can excuse the feeling of delight, the bitter unpardoning spirit, with which Edward exacted it. It might suit a Muley Abdallah,

<sup>154</sup> M. Westm. 461, 462.<sup>155</sup> Ib. 459.<sup>156</sup> Ib. 460.

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Abdallah, sultan of Morocco ; it was unworthy of a Christian and an English king.

Bruce having passed the winter at Rachlin, his friends became impatient of their inactivity, and baron Douglas projected an expedition to the isle of Arran. He crossed the sea to it, and surprised some vessels laden with provisions and stores, which refitted and refreshed his friends<sup>157</sup>. Bruce ventured after him, with all the recruits he had collected. From inquiries which he made at landing, he found that some strangers had preceded him, and had discomfited the warden of Arran. He anticipated it to be an exploit of Douglas, and blew his horn, till it was heard and answered by his friend. Their forces united, and Bruce resolved to send a trusty spy to Carrick, his native territory, to explore its present state, the disposition of his clansmen, and the positions of his enemies. The man was directed to make a fire on an eminence at Turnberry, if it were prudent for the king to visit it<sup>158</sup>. The messenger found few who would talk of their lord, from the dread of its consequence ; many had become decidedly hostile to him ; and the land and castle were occupied by the English under Sir Henry Percy. The king was watching the opposite hills all the day, from Arran, but saw no sign. In the evening a flame began to be visible. Rejoicing at the sight, they lunched their little galleys<sup>159</sup>, and proceeded to Carrick in a vernal evening, in number three hundred men<sup>160</sup>. They rowed till night enveloped them. They had “ na nedile na stane ” to direct them ; but the fire was burning light and clear, and they steered towards it. They found their spy waiting on the coast. He told the king, that his attempt was hopeless, as Percy, with three hundred English, was in the castle,

<sup>157</sup> Barb. 110—114.

<sup>158</sup> Ib. 114—117.

<sup>159</sup> Ib. 117—120. The author introduces here a digression on astrology and necro-

mancy, occasioned by the predicting speech of his hostess before he embarked.

<sup>160</sup> Barbour opens his fifth book with a description of the spring, p. 129.



castle, “ful filled off despite and pride.” Bruce in rage exclaimed, “Traitor! why then did you make the fire?” He answered, that he had not kindled it; but that observing one, and not daring to extinguish it, he had come down to the coast, to prevent the king from being deceived. Bruce consulted what was now to be done. His spirited brother, Edward, exhorted him to attempt some enterprise, protesting, that nothing should drive him back to the sea. Bruce adopted his bold advice; marched to the town, scaled and took it; destroyed all he found; intimidated and defied Percy, who kept to his castle; and, after remaining three days on his hereditary possessions, obtaining information of the fate of his friends, diffusing the alarm of his name, and rekindling the secret hopes of his countrymen, he departed, when new bodies of English arrived in the mountainous district beyond<sup>161</sup>. Douglas essayed an excursion among his own vassals, and surprised the English garrison, as it was proceeding to church on Palm Sunday, and destroyed them<sup>162</sup>.

The family of Bruce were peculiarly unfortunate in their efforts to support his dignity. He was expecting the junction of his two brothers, Alexander and Thomas, with the assistance they could collect. They got together 700 followers, and landed with them at Lochrean, in Galloway; but they were attacked and routed by a chieftain favourable to Edward. The two brothers, severely wounded and half dead, were taken prisoners, and conveyed to Carlisle. They were executed as rigorously as their friends had suffered; and their heads, in conformity to the ancient Turkish custom of the country, were exhibited on the gates of Carlisle<sup>163</sup>.

To this period, instead of the romantic adventures into which Barbour deviates to aggrandize his hero, we may apply the striking description

<sup>161</sup> Barb. 130, 131.

that Palm Sunday was the 19th March in 1307. Ib. p. 141.

<sup>162</sup> Ib. 138—146.—Mr. Pinkerton remarks,

<sup>163</sup> M. Westm. 464. Langtoft, 336—338.

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description of Fordun, that the king was reduced to such necessity, that he passed a long period without any other food than herbs and roots and water; his shoes were worn off his feet, and he wandered barefooted—now hiding alone in some of the islands, now chased by his enemies, and despised and ridiculed by his own vassals<sup>164</sup>. Such was the stormy season that followed his rash coronation—an enterprise of patriotism or ambition, that had brought desolation to his own family and to his bravest friends. Perhaps his sudden seizure of greatness may be justly ascribed to his patriotic feelings; for he is stated to have exclaimed in the midst of his distresses, “Unless the ancient liberty of Scotland had excited me, I would not have endured such sufferings as these for the empire of the world<sup>165</sup>.”

It is stated, that Christiana, a lady of the isles, a noble and kind lady, greatly assisted him<sup>166</sup>. His cause was so popular among the commonalty of Scotland<sup>167</sup>, that when he could escape his pursuers, he frequently found supporters. In May he collected enough to gain an advantage over the English commander at Loudon Hill<sup>168</sup>, and three days afterwards he defeated another<sup>169</sup>. But these successes were transient; more English forces came up, and he again retired.

His greatest benefit was the death of his unrelenting and able persecutor. Edward, feeling an improvement of strength, thought he had recovered, and made an offering of his horse-litter in the cathedral at Carlisle. Impatient to execute his meditated resentment on Scotland, he mounted his horse in his way to the Solway Frith, but his effort produced a relapse. In four days he could  
advance

<sup>164</sup> Fordun, 1000.

<sup>165</sup> Ford. 998. Barbour.

<sup>166</sup> Ford. 1000.

<sup>167</sup> Ib. 1001.

<sup>168</sup> M. Westm. 465. Barbour, Buke 8. p. 10.

says, he got together 600 men. But he gives Sir Aymer, his antagonist, 3000; an unlikely disproportion!

<sup>169</sup> M. Westm. 465.



advance but six miles. He reached Burgh on the Sands on 6 July 1307, and the next day “expired in sight of that country which he had devoted to destruction<sup>170</sup>.”

The ease with which Philip Augustus had wrested Normandy from John, inspired the French government with a determination to expel the English from Gascony. Edward, not projecting any quarrel with France, performed, on his accession, the customary homage, for the frontier province, to the French sovereign then reigning; renewed it to his successor, and appeared also at his parliament<sup>171</sup>. The discussions of Edward with Scotland presented to France, an auspicious occasion for attempting the same incorporation of Guienne, which Edward had effected of Wales, and seemed meditating with respect to Scotland. The French king therefore made the accidental conflict between the seamen of the two countries, a serious ground of remonstrance and quarrel<sup>172</sup>. He cited Edward to appear in person at Paris, and confiscated all his dominions in Gascony because he disobeyed. This province was invaded by the French king's brother, when the Scottish government was stimulated to attack Edward, and while Wales was still turbulent. Occupied by these important objects at home, Edward was unable to succour Gascony effectually<sup>173</sup>. Encouraged by this success, Philip also ventured to contest with him the predominance in Flanders. Edward made several military expeditions to this country<sup>174</sup>; but here, as in Gascony, the exertions necessary for his Scottish warfare enfeebled his offensive arm. France now fully learnt the use of Scotland to embarrass and divide the martial force of England. The Pope attempted to adjust their differences; but

his

<sup>170</sup> Hailes' Ann. vol. 2. p. 21. He had just completed his sixty-eighth year, and had reigned 34 years and seven months.

<sup>171</sup> Wals. 4. & 14.

<sup>172</sup> See before, p. 55.

<sup>173</sup> Wals. 25. 27. 35. Rymer, vol. 2. pp. 619. 642--652. The Gascon nobility were not cordially attached to England. Their letter to Edward, in Rymer, p. 168, contains phrases not very submissive.

<sup>174</sup> Hem. 147. Wals. 29. 34—41. 48. 56.

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his award was too impartial to be satisfactory<sup>175</sup>. The discussions were at last ended by Edward's withdrawing from Flanders, and Philip's restoring Guienne. A temporary friendship ensued, and Edward married Margaret, the French king's sister, for his second wife<sup>176</sup>.

The king of Arragon countenancing the Sicilian insurgents who perpetrated the Sicilian vespers, Charles of Anjou, who had commanded those French invaders that had fallen the victims to his ambition, defied him to a single combat before the king of England, at Bourdeaux<sup>177</sup>. But Edward declared that he would not permit such a duel in any part of his dominions<sup>178</sup>.

Edward had repeated discussions with the Pope, on the taxation of the clergy<sup>179</sup>. He seems to have paid the annual tribute to Rome, which John had commenced<sup>180</sup>. The Pope was at one time extravagant enough to claim the feudal sovereignty of Scotland, as a fief which had always belonged to the church; and Edward condescended to answer a pretension so untrue and so absurd<sup>181</sup>. It is visible from all his negociations with St. Peter's chair, that the English government was projecting the diminution of the papal power in England. It was too firmly rooted, by time and prejudice,

<sup>175</sup> The reference to Boniface was made to him, not as Pope, but, as a private person. Rymer, vol. 2. pp. 808—819. The papal award was dated 27 June 1298. M. Guillard, in the Mem. Acad. Inscr. v. 74. p. 154, has remarked on the mistatements which historians have given of its contents.

<sup>176</sup> Wals. 44; who remarks, that Edward did no benefit to his kingdom by this marriage. *Ib.*

<sup>177</sup> See the articles of this intended battle, in Rymer, p. 226.

<sup>178</sup> Edward, in his letter, declares, that although he should gain by it the two kingdoms of Arragon and Sicily, he would not

permit such a duel, either in his own dominions, or in any place in which he could prevent it. Rymer, p. 239.

<sup>179</sup> See the numerous bulls and letters inserted by Rymer in his 2d volume.

<sup>180</sup> See the acknowledgments given by the Pope to the King on receipt of this money; which Rymer has printed, pp. 107. 208. 267.

<sup>181</sup> Walsingham states the Pope's claims and the King's answers, pp. 46—49. He says that the Scots, "knowing that all things were *venal* at Rome," bribed the Pope to make his claim, to defeat the ambition of Edward. p. 46. And see Rymer, pp. 844. 873. 883.



prejudice, to be destroyed in one reign. But the firm and persevering spirit of Edward began that system of measures, which shook its stability, and prepared the minds of the nation for its subsequent abasement.

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His expulsion of the Jews from England was a sacrifice of his good sense to the vulgar prejudices of his day<sup>182</sup>. If they required exorbitant interest for their loans, or were severe in exacting their legal remedies, they acted in these points as money-dealers, not as Jews, and ought not to have been punished more than the Italian usurers, who were equally extortionate, but were patronized by the law. It would have better suited his wisdom to have discerned the commercial utilities of the Jewish nation, and to have roused his subjects to an imitation of its industry, perseverance, and foreign correspondence.—His measures for preventing the further aggrandizement of the church, for subjecting its property to the general taxation of his people, and for preserving its revenues from foreign incumbents, were honourable to his sagacity and firmness, and led the way to our great Reformation.—The useful laws which he promoted on the landed property of the kingdom, his improvements in our courts of judicature and jurisprudence, and his conceded though extorted assent to the popular rights of his subjects, will be more fully considered in the succeeding Chapters, on our Constitution and Laws.—His reign may be now closed with the description of his person and habits, from a contemporary, who survived him.

His internal  
regulations.

His head spherical; his eyes round, and gentle and dovelike when he was pleased, but fierce as a lion's, and sparkling with fire, when he was disturbed; his hair black and crisp; his nose prominent, and rather raised in the middle; his chest was broad; his arms were agile; his thighs long; his feet arched; his body

Edward's  
person and  
character.

was

<sup>182</sup> See note at the end of this chapter.

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was firm and fleshy, but not fat. He was so strong and active, that with his hand he could leap into his saddle. Passionately fond of hunting, whenever he was not engaged in war, he amused his leisure with his dogs and falcons. He was rarely indisposed, and did not lose either his teeth or his sight by age. Temperate by habit, he never devoted himself to the luxuries of his palace. He never wore his crown after the day of his coronation, thinking it rather a burden than an honour. He declined the royal garments of purple, and went about in the plain and common dress of a plebeian. Being once asked, why he did not wear richer apparel? he answered with the consciousness of true greatness, that it was absurd to suppose that he could be more estimable in fine, than in simple clothing. No man was more acute in counsel, more fervid in eloquence, more self-possessed in danger, more cautious in prosperity, more firm in adversity. Those whom he once loved, he scarcely ever forsook; but he rarely admitted into his favour any one that had excited his dislike. His liberalities were magnificent<sup>183</sup>. To this encomium we may add his affectionate tribute of respect to his mother. Invited to visit the king of France, he had reached Canterbury on his way to it, when he heard that she was afflicted with an illness. He hastened to her at Ambresbury, and sent messengers to excuse himself to the French sovereign<sup>184</sup>.

<sup>183</sup> This is taken from a "Commemoratio," addressed to his widow, queen Margaret, and preserved in the Cotton Library, MS. Nero, D 2. The author was John of London.

<sup>184</sup> Wals. Hist. p. 13. The next year she took the veil.

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NOTE ON THE JEWS.

AFTER the destruction of Jerusalem on the siege of Titus, the Jews dispersed themselves over the other parts of the world. Many retired into Mesopotamia, and had celebrated academies at Babylon. Bartolocci, Bib. Rab. vol. 3. p. 663. Others were settled at Treves and Cologne, in the times of

Adrian and also of Constantine, who permitted them to be magistrates and decurions at Cologne. Theodoric let them roof their synagogues at Genoa. Cassiod. 52. Gregory of Tours mentions them in France, where Chilperic endeavoured to convert some by force, p. 132; and where they acted as physicians,



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physicians, p. 96; and Adelm. p. 497. Charlemagne found them at Pavia, and is said to have employed one as his ambassador to the Persian king. *Ib.* 405. 416. In Spain, they abounded from such early times, that the Jews of Toledo stated themselves to Alonso VI. to be the descendants of the tribes who had fled from the hostilities of Nebuchadnezzar. *Bartol.* vol. 1. pp. 7—10. They are noticed as being in Spain in the ancient councils of Elvira and Toledo. *Basnage*, vol. 4. pp. 1070 to 1078. In the tenth century they were numerous in Bohemia. *Ib.* p. 1085. And their sufferings from some of the crusaders, shew their colonies on the Rhine in Germany, in the eleventh century. They became very rich in France, till 1182, when Philip Augustus expelled them, *Rigord.* p. 166; though in 1198 he invited them back, p. 199. They were persecuted there again in 1252, *Matt. Paris*, p. 861; and banished from the French dominions in 1395; from Spain in 1492, from Portugal in 1500; and from Vienna in 1669. They have been also driven from Naples; *Bartoloc.* vol. 1. pp. 39. 54. 82. 720. They consoled themselves amid these sufferings, by believing that they have kings in the farthest parts of the world. *Bartol.* p. 121. Their kings may be those of imagination, but their nation seems to be every where scattered; and yet the curious fact, that the great Affghan nations in India derive themselves from king Saul, gives some colour to their traditions of distant royalty.

In England they have been variously treated. Under the patronage of William the Conqueror, they came into England. They were declared to be under the protection of the king; a regulation which preserved them from servitude to others, and made him their liege lord. No one else was allowed to interfere either with their persons or their property. *Wilk. Leg. Angl.* 203. Henry II. favoured them. Before his time they were obliged to carry their dead to London, to be buried. Their place of burial is supposed to have been near Redcross-street. But Henry II. gave them leave to

have a cemetery near every city, without the walls, if they could buy one. *Hoved.* 668. *Bromt.* 1129. Richard I. was also their friend. He ordered their property to be registered, and directed their contracts to be made before two Jewish lawyers, two Christian lawyers, two registers, and two presiding persons. One copy of the deed was to be kept by the Jewish lender; the other in an official chest with three locks, of which the Jewish lawyers held one of the keys. *Hoved.* p. 745. John tormented them, to extort money.

Henry III. on the whole, protected and encouraged them. Among our ancient rolls of his reign, still preserved in the Tower, we have a safe-conduct for the Jews coming into his kingdom. *Cal. Rot.* p. 12. He allowed their rabbis to promulgate excommunications against other Jews in England. *Ib.* p. 23. We find their chief-priest presented to the king after his election, and the king assenting to his appointment; and to another, called the Bishop of the Jews, his sacerdotal dignity was, for three marks of gold, restored to him, of which, for certain transgressions, he had been deprived. *Ib.* p. 29. In the disturbances between Henry III. and his barons, the king received all the Jews of London under his care, that he might protect them from violence, *ib.* p. 35; and he permitted a Jew to sell the debt of a Christian, which had been forbidden; *ib.* p. 43. He raised various sums of money on them by way of tallage, but not oppressively. See *ib.* pp. 13. 16. 21. 25. 33; &c. When particular places were incensed against them, he yielded to the local prejudice; and thus granted to the burgesses of Derby, that no Jews should live in that city, p. 32. So at Rumsey, p. 38. But we find several protections granted to the Jews of London and Lincoln, pp. 36, 37. 39. He forbade them to buy lands out of a city or borough, or to devise their tenements to Christians: but they might leave them to Jews. *Ib.* p. 44. For 5,000 marks he once granted to his brother all the Jews in England, *ib.* p. 27; and at another time he gave him 6,000

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6,000 marks "de Judaismo," in aid of his expedition to Palestine, *ib.* p. 43.

Henry III. took also some trouble for their conversion, and built a house and church for those who were converted. *Cal. Rot.* p. 44. This church was on the site of the present Rolls chapel in Chancery-lane. It was annexed by patent, in 1377, to the Master of the Rolls by Edward III, and has since continued to be appended to that dignified office. *Stow's Survey of London.*

Under Edward I. a new policy was adopted towards them ; which was the more extraordinary, as the whole kingdom had become more enlightened. Our ancient Chroniclers contain many complaints against their conduct, and especially of their crucifying children in derision of our Saviour. This was so contrary to their interest, that we cannot avoid treating the imputation as a fable. Some instances of their religious zeal and imprudence seem to stand in a less questionable shape. It was ordered that on Easter eve they should keep their doors and windows shut, because they were *accustomed* to mock the Christians on that day. *Wilk. Concil.* vol. 2. p. 155. There is a legal document of Henry III. still more expressive in its detail, because the charge has all the forms of juridical evidence and examination. A physician at Norwich complained, that as his son, a boy of five years of age, was playing in the streets of Norwich, Jacob, a Jew there, took him up, carried him to his house, circumcised him, wished to make him a Jew, and kept him there a day and a night, till the clamour of the neighbours procured his release. The evidence was, 1st, The boy's visible state, and description of the circumstance : 2d, The officers of the archdeacon, who brought away the boy, and swore that they found him in a state of recent circumcision. Other witnesses appeared. Prynne gives this record in his "Demurrer to the Jews," p. 19. Yet it is material to remark, that the charge was not made till four years afterwards; and this delay, some circumstances of the case, and

a variation between the charge and evidence as to finding the boy, the one placing him in the Jew's house, the other stating that he was found wandering near the river after the event, tempt one to suspect some collusion or falsehood in the business. That the Jews, to whom the ecclesiastical plate and ornaments were often pledged as securities for monies borrowed, did not always treat the deposits with Christian respect, may be believed. That they were strict in exacting payment of their loans, may be also admitted. And that there could not be, in that age of fierce passions and prejudices, any cordiality between such Jews and Christians who were sincere believers of their respective faiths ; and that in this state of mutual hostility, some irritated or foolish Jews may have been occasionally violent and wild, need not be doubted. But all these causes of offence were more likely to have occurred in reigns anterior to Edward I. than in his own ; and yet from the beginning of his reign there was a visible disposition to discountenance them.

They were forbidden to sell their debts without leave of the king. *Cal. Rot.* p. 46. They were ordered not to erect new synagogues. Christians were forbidden to eat with them, or to have them for physicians. And they were ordered to have two woollen tablets, of different colours, two fingers broad and four fingers long, to be sewn to their exterior garments, on their breasts, that they might be known from Christians. *Wilk. Conc.* vol. 2. p. 155. They were ordered not to lend money on usury, but to live by the labour of their hands, or by commerce. *Wikes' Chron. Gale Script.* vol. 2. p. 103. Their archives were frequently scrutinized, *Cal. Rot.* pp. 4. 47. 49 ; and inquisitions were ordered to see if they used the directed distinction in dress, p. 48. We find them at Oxford, differing with the vice-chancellor, in this reign. *Ib.* p. 46. In the preceding, the clergy of Oxford had quarrelled with and plundered them, but were imprisoned for the violence. *Wikes' Chron.* p. 45. We find them mentioned as possessing various houses in  
Marlborough



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Marlborough and Andover, Cal. Rot. p. 49 ; and they held tenements under lords, Plac. Parl. 98.

We may consider the parts about the present Old Jewry as one of their ancient seats of residence in London, because St. Lawrence in Judaism is mentioned, Cal. Rot. p. 89. St. Alan Upwell is also noticed as in Judaism. Ib. 92. And as Henry III. gave to a knight the Tower of London, cum Judaism, and the Thames, ib. p. 17. we may infer, that the district near Tower-hill, of which the present Jewry-street is a part, was also their appropriated station.

They were never quite secure in London ; for though Henry III. befriended them, yet even in his reign, in 1263, they were attacked by wilful rioters, who broke into their houses, and, sparing neither age nor sex, slew 400 persons, and seized their wealth : the earl of Leicester permitted a part of the plunder to be given to him. The Chronicler states, that in this abominable massacre neither babes at the breast, nor hoary age, found mercy. Chron. Wikes, p. 60.

Perhaps we cannot have a stronger indication of the popular calumnies, and of the degree of the popular prejudice against them, than the occurrences in London in 1256. Seventy-one Jews were imprisoned on a charge of crucifying a boy, which twenty-five knights asserted upon oath. The Franciscans, then emerging into note, by their prayers and intercessions liberated them from death. The good-natured public would not refer this act of mercy to the charity of the new order, but suspected that they were bribed to it ; and so strong was this persuasion, and so great the popular resentment against the friars for their interference, that the common people refused to give the Franciscans any alms in future—a sentence of death by famine to a new mendicant order then subsisting on the daily bounty they could obtain. Matt. Paris, p. 922.

The first great attack upon them by Edward I. was in 1279, when they were convicted and executed in great numbers for

clipping the coin. Wals. 8. Ten years afterwards, the government had determined upon its hostile policy towards them, and therefore, in 1289, Edward expelled them from Gascony. Ib. 15. This was followed in 1290 by their expulsion from England. Ib. A strange, impolitic, and cruel measure, by which one old chronicler had the sense to see that the revenue suffered. Wikes' Chron. p. 122. Another chronicler ascribes it to the queen dowager, his mother. Ann. Wav. p. 242. He benefited his own wife from the spoils of this unfortunate people ; for in the eleventh of his reign, he gave her all the goods of the Jews that had then been forfeited to him. Cal. Rot. p. 50. But, whatever was its origin, it was an unstatesmanlike act, unworthy of Edward I. and not much unlike the Muscovite prejudice, which anciently would not admit them into their country, Rer. Muscovit. p. 127 ; though less savage than the conduct of John Basilides, who ordered the Jews whom he met with in his invasion of Poland, that would not be baptized, to be drowned in the Don ; Rer. Muscov. p. 282. The expulsion of the Jews from England was the more disgraceful, because countries, at that time more superstitious, permitted their continued residence. As the Annalist narrates the circumstance with a qualifying "*sicut a plerisque vulgariter dicebatur,*" we will hope that it was but a rumour, that the Cinque Ports seamen who were to convey them out of the kingdom, "robbed them of their property, and threw them into the sea." Chron. Wikes, p. 122.

When we recollect their massacre along the Rhine in 1096, and in England in the time of Richard I. : and read of their repeated destructions in Germany ; in 1221 at Erfurt, Germ. Scrip. Pistor. vol. 1. p. 695 ; in 1236 at Fulda, when on an accusation of their killing Christian boys for their blood, the emperor ordered an inquiry whether Christian blood was a *necessary* part of their passover, to which the official answer was, that *nothing certain* was known on the subject,

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ject, Ger. Rer. Urtis. p. 91; in 1240 at Frankfort "with fire and sword;" in 1282 at Mentz and other places, Trithem. Chron. p. 291; in 1298 at Nuremberg, and through all Franconia, Germ. Script. Freheri, vol. 1. pp. 341. 402:—That they were also exterminated from Bavaria, Æn. Sylv. ib. vol. 2. p. 79; that in 1348, 1349 and 1350, they were killed "like cattle," and mercilessly burnt in great numbers at Basle, Friburg, Spires, Wurms, Francfort, Mentz, Alsace, Cologne, and in every part of Germany, Germ. Script. Urtis. pp. 177, 178. 148, 149. 1 Freheri, and 1 Meibom. 285. 444. at which time, because a pestilence ravaged the Continent, they were supposed to have caused it by poisoning all the wells; and at which crisis they found themselves safe no where but at Avignon, where pope Clement vi. defended them, Urtis. p. 147; that in 1391 they were burnt in Gotha, Hist. Germ. Pist. vol. 1. p. 984; and even so late as 1510 in Brandenburg, Trith. Chron. 483:—When we recal to mind that these are only specimens of what they endured in other places, and were for several centuries in perpetual danger of every where suffering, we can hardly persuade ourselves that any remnant of the nation so bitterly persecuted can now be surviving: And yet, such is the extraordinary history and preservation of this unparalleled people, that above a million are now in Poland, Lithuania, and the Austrian dominions; that in 1791 they stated their numbers in France to be above 60,000; that there are 30,000 in Salonica; 22,000 in Amsterdam; 10,000 in Rome; 5,000 at Mantua; 2,500 at Adrianople; that they are spread over various parts of Germany, and through the Turkish empire, and abound even in Georgia and Mount Caucasus; that they are in Ægypt, Morocco, and other parts of Africa; and have, for ages, penetrated to India and China. At Copenhagen they have

an institution for instructing their youth in Hebrew, German, French, geography and natural history; at Brunswick they have a similar establishment; also at Berlin; and they have even obtained permission to build a synagogue at Vienna, and to open public schools there. The Jewish nation must be astonished to find the two opposite vaticinations of their ancient Prophets, *both* so literally fulfilled—That they should be every where scattered, despised and persecuted; and yet, that amid all their sufferings, their race should be preserved and continued, to be ultimately re-assembled. In their state of such oft repeated misery, their sublime *Isaiah* must as often have afforded them the noblest consolation—

But thou, Israel! my servant—  
Fear thou not; for I am with thee:  
Be not dismayed;  
For I am thy God.  
I will strengthen thee;  
Yea, I will uphold thee  
With the right hand of my righteousness.  
Fear not, thou worm Jacob!  
And ye men of Israel!  
I will help thee, saith the Lord  
And thy Redeemer, the Holy One of  
Israel.

Fear not, for I have redeemed thee;  
I have called thee by thy name;  
Thou art mine.  
When thou passest through the waters,  
I will be with thee;  
And through the rivers,  
They shall not overflow thee:  
When thou walkest through the fire,  
Thou shalt not be burned; [thee.  
Neither shall the flame kindle upon .

Fear not; for I am with thee:  
I will bring thy seed from the East,  
And gather thee from the West:  
I will say to the North, "Give up;"  
And to the South, "Keep not back:"  
"Bring my sons from afar,  
And my daughters from the ends of  
the Earth."—ISAIAH xli. & xliii.



# HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

## CHAP III.

HISTORY OF THE REIGN OF EDWARD THE SECOND,  
SURNAMED CARNARVON.

1307—1327.

IT is because no royal adversity has been more clearly deducible from the personal errors of the sovereign, that the calamities of this reign become one of those historical lessons, by which future ages are benefited. Other examples may teach a king of England what to imitate; but the conduct of Edward II. impressively points out what he must avoid, in order to reign, not merely with honour, but even with personal safety and ordinary comfort<sup>1</sup>.

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This

<sup>1</sup> We possess on this reign, besides Hemmingford and the continuation of Trivetius, five contemporary authors, viz. Trokelowe, De la Moor, Henry of Blandford, the Monk of Malmsbury, and Adam Murimuth. Trokelowe's Annals were printed by Hearne, from the Cotton MSS. Claud. D 6. They contain a full detail of the first part of his reign, and extend to 1323. He writes as the friend of the barons; and describes himself as having seen the poor dying in the streets in the famine of 1315. p. 35.—Sir Thomas de la Moor was in the king's service, and obviously inclines to favour him. He is not so full as Trokelowe, on Gaveston, but gives a very interesting account of the last part of the reign. He wrote in French. The Latin translation of it is published in Camden's

Angl. Norm. p. 593. — Henry of Blandford's Chronicle is a mere fragment of a few years, of which the chief features are, the articles of the truce with Scotland, and the king's accusation of the bishop of Hereford. The Monk of Malmsbury's Life of Edw. II. is an important work: It extends from 1307 to the King's death, and adds a few incidents to 1348. He gives the fullest account of Gaveston's death. His work is printed by Hearne, from a private gentleman's MSS. after Trokelowe and Blandford. — Adam Murimuth, a canon of London, has left us a short chronicle, compiled from his diary. He says, that after 1305 he writes from his own eyesight and hearing. It is printed after the continuation of Trivetius.

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This king acceded to the throne with every political advantage. His father had left that reputation, which always at first sanctifies the son, whatever be his merit ; and so much national prosperity had resulted from the general ability of the preceding reign, that the new king had only to allow the political machine, which his father had organized, to continue its operation. The country was improving in trade and cultivation, and in that affluence, which these favourite objects of human pursuit cannot flourish without diffusing. The power of the church was restricted to a more salubrious influence. The barons, though they had given even the irascible conqueror of Scotland a lesson, that they were not to be oppressed with safety, yet by that effervescence had marked to the future sovereign his true path of domestic policy. Wales was at last flattering itself into good humour, on seeing a king born among its venerated mountains, seated on the throne of Lloegyr. France was in amity. And Scotland, though unquiet wherever Bruce could penetrate or surprise, had been too often subdued, to maintain a perilous warfare against the military power of England, wisely directed. A new reign and a young king are always popular. Thus every thing combined to surround Edward II. with glory, and to promise a reign of peculiar felicity. It would seem to have required no common infatuation to have thrown down any prince from such a pedestal, on which he was as firmly as he was highly exalted. Love, honour, and happiness, seemed to be his natural inheritance. Contempt, degradation, and misery, became his lot.

But no department of human affairs can be conducted prosperously, without some degree of judgment and moral prudence ; and Edward II. appears to have had neither. His self-will was passionate, arbitrary, and obstinate. Violent and weak, dissolute and proud, his first action astonished all classes of the community, and his next alarmed and disgusted them. Before his father's  
body



body was interred, this inconsiderate youth, not anticipating or not regarding the inferences that his subjects would make to his own discredit, from an action so illegal and precipitate, caused the chief minister and executor of the late king, a prelate who had the confidence and judgment of his venerable master as the evidence of his official worth, to be arrested and thrown into a dungeon, while he seized his property, without any known cause of complaint but the bishop's friendly endeavours to restrain his follies and too lavish expenditure while he was a prince<sup>2</sup>. This intemperate action was followed by another, not less obnoxious; the recal of Piers de Gaveston to be his prime favourite and minister; a youth, neither older, nor wiser, nor more regular than himself.

The king  
recals Piers  
de Gaveston.

Piers de Gaveston was the son of a Gascon knight; and the late king, pleased with the services of the father, had made the lad a page to the heir-apparent. They were brought up together; and the prince contracted such an undue attachment to his companion, that he forsook the society of all the young nobility for the company of the seducing favourite. Neither the king's commands, nor the persuasions of the great, could separate them<sup>3</sup>; and we may judge of their amusements and tendencies, by observing, that the prince, by Gaveston's counsel, broke into the parks of the late king's treasurer and confidential counsellor, for which Edward banished his son from his presence<sup>4</sup>. The prince continuing his irregularities, and his young favourite being considered as their cause or promoter, the parliament concurred with the king's wishes

<sup>2</sup> Trokelowe, pp. 3 & 4. Ad. Murimuth, p. 38. Trokelowe says, that Edward had long nourished vindictive feelings against him, for these admonitions. The King's hatred was so violent, that no one, adds the author, "dared offer a word in his behalf." Ib.

<sup>3</sup> Trokelowe, pp. 4 & 5. Walsingham Hist. p. 68.

<sup>4</sup> This is mentioned in a chronicle in Peter Coll. Library, from which Leland took the extracts published in his Collect. vol. 2. p. 473.

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wishes for the reformation of his heir-apparent, and banished Gaveston, as the incentive to his misconduct, out of the kingdom<sup>5</sup>. Gaveston might have been the immediate tempter, but Edward I. was the real corrupter of his son. He surrounded his boyish day with all the pomp of greatness, and with obsequious flattery, at that period of his life, when the character most needs the wise discipline of judicious restraint and simple habits. Soon after the prince was thirteen, his father made him the regent of the kingdom, on departing for Flanders, and some assisting counsellors were appointed to direct him<sup>6</sup>. But these, in discharging the business of the office, would leave the prince to enjoy all those blandishments and appendages of a splendid court, which the world would be as eager to pay to a paternal idol so prematurely exalted, as the flattered child would be impatient to receive. After such a gratification of boyish vanity, before any judgment existed to counteract its mischief, what benefit could Edward expect that his son would receive from any moral or lettered tuition? Good counsel would only seem monkish severity; instruction, pedantry; rebuke, impertinence; and hesitating obedience, even to irregular caprices, presumptuous disaffection. But Edward's personal pride blinded his discretion; and that bosom sin, which led him, as much as his policy, to seize the crowns of Wales and Scotland, equally urged him to invest *his* son, even in childhood, with those ostentatious distinctions which defeated his own hopes and purposes, and severely avenged his persevering and un pitying ambition. The paternal mind that has grown up to greatness amid difficulties and restraints, too often destroys the natural

<sup>5</sup> The Scala Chronica, written in the time of Edward III. thus mentions the circumstance: "Peter Gavirston was accusid to the king of many crymes, and as not worthy to be about his sunne, prince Edward, wherapon he was banishid owt of England."

Lel. Coll. vol. 2. p. 543. Rymer gives the oaths that the king exacted from Gaveston, who, on his recal, procured the Pope's absolution from them. Cont. Trivet. p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Wals. Hist. p. 39.



natural promise of the son, by surrounding him with those indulgencies and distinctions which preclude the formation of active intellect, steady judgment, and moral habits.

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The old king's advice on his death-bed, to his successor, to be just and affable to all; to be constant in his words and actions; to be kind to the deserving, and merciful to the distressed; and never to recal Gaveston on pain of a father's malediction—was heard by a mind that was resolved to disobey it; and therefore, before his father's body had reached London, Edward imprisoned the chief minister, and sent to Gascony for his banished favourite<sup>7</sup>.

Continuing to act with all the precipitation of a weak mind, he created him, on his arrival, earl of Cornwall; an honour, then as now, usually reserved for the royal family<sup>8</sup>; and on departing for France, to marry its king's daughter, passing by all the nobles of his court and country, he appointed Gaveston to be its regent in his absence<sup>9</sup>. The great murmured, and obeyed; but, when they attended, with the regent, to receive Edward on his return from his nuptials, they were disgusted at seeing their sovereign rush publicly into his favourite's arms, and kiss him with a familiarity which produced a general contempt<sup>10</sup>. He called him his brother; he gave him Wallingford, which had been assigned to his queen<sup>11</sup>; and suffered him to rule like a second king, to whom none were equal, and whom all were to obey<sup>12</sup>.

Promotes  
him to great  
honours.

Elegant in his person, nice in his manners, and sprightly in his intellect,

<sup>7</sup> Wals. Hist. p. 39.—Wylliam de Pakington states, that Edward on his death bed had requested of his favourite lords, that "they shulld not suffre Peter Gaveston to cum agayne yn to England to sette his sunne agayne on ryot." *Lel. Coll.* vol. 2. p. 461.—He arrested the minister at Waltham. *Hem.* 1. p. 244.

<sup>8</sup> *Trok.* 5.—The Monk. of Malm. notices that the king himself doubted whether he had the power to confer the honour, and that

the larger part of the barons, that is, the parliament, did not consent to it. p. 95.

<sup>9</sup> *Trok.* 5.—The Monk of Malm. says it was a "mira res," that he who was so lately an exile from England, should now be its governor and keeper. 98.

<sup>10</sup> *Trok.* p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> W. de Pakington's Chronicle. 2 *Lel. Coll.* p. 461.

<sup>12</sup> Monk of Malm. 95.

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Gaveston's  
arrogance ;

intellect<sup>13</sup>, Piers lived to shew that the same early greatness which had injured his royal master, had not been more salutary to himself. Instead of reconciling, by prudent courtesies, the minds of the dissatisfied great to his undeserved elevation, he gratified his own vanity, and affronted theirs, by appearing at the coronation in superior splendour<sup>14</sup>. This exhibition would have been soon forgotten ; but he proclaimed a tournament at Wallingford, and had the folly to plan an insult to the barons who attended it, which they were the least likely to forgive. He placed on his own side all the young and robust knights, whom entreaty or reward could allure, and by their numbers overpowered and disgraced the nobles who attempted a competition. He carried off the prizes<sup>15</sup>. His arrogance and wilful insolence increasing with the king's favour, which opposition only stimulated to fresh extravagance<sup>16</sup>, he publicly taunted the first men of the kingdom with contumelious nicknames<sup>17</sup>. His rapacity was also precipitate and undisguised ; and what he amassed from the royal treasure, he sent out of the kingdom<sup>18</sup>. The king seemed to rival him in folly ; for it

<sup>13</sup> Moor's Vita Ed. II. p. 593.

<sup>14</sup> Moor, 593. And Ad. Murimuth remarks, that, surpassing every one in his noble habiliments, he incurred the envy and the hatred of all. p. 39.

<sup>15</sup> Mon. Malm. 97. Trok. 6.

<sup>16</sup> The Monk of Malmsbury remarks, that the more the great opposed him, the more the king loved him. p. 95.

<sup>17</sup> W. de Pakington thus mentions them : " calling the counte of Glocestre, cosine to the king, ' Cocolds Byrde ; ' syr Henry Lacy, earl of Lincoln, ' Boele Crenee ; ' and syr Gui counte of Warwick, ' Noer Chien d'Arderne : ' and he caulled the gentil counte Thomas of Lancastre, the kinges nephew, ' Vieliers porceo quil ezt greles et de bel entaile. ' " p. 461.—Walsingham also states, that he

named Lancaster ' the Stage Player ; ' the earl of Pembroke ' Joseph the Jew, ' because he was pale and tall ; and the earl of Warwick, because his complexion was sallow, ' the Black Dog of Arderne. ' p. 66.—The continuation of Trivet. says generally, *proceres terræ contemnebat ; infestis verbis et minis pomposis eos vilipendebat.* p. 4.

<sup>18</sup> Trokelowe 6.—The old chronicle of Peter College says, ' Gaveston conveyed the table and tristilles of gold from the tresory of Westminstre, and delyvered them to one Armery of Frisconbaude, to be caryd yn to Gascoyn. ' 2 Lel. p. 473.—Hemingford values the treasure sent abroad by Gaveston, at 100,000 pounds, besides gold and precious stones. p. 244.



it is remarked, that if any of the barons entered the royal chamber while Gaveston was there, his smiles and conversation were wholly addressed to the giddy and obnoxious favourite<sup>19</sup>. No grace could be obtained, no business transacted, with the sovereign, but through him<sup>20</sup>. Even the tributes of respect offered by his people, the king did not venture to take without Gaveston's participation and permission<sup>21</sup>. This absurd prepossession only insured his destruction. In vain the king tried to stem the torrent of contempt by a public edict, that none should call him Piers Gaveston, but "the earl of Cornwall<sup>22</sup>." The respect which insolence forfeits, no authority can extort. The nobles called on the king to convene a parliament, to consider the grievances of the land; and he found it necessary to order that they should not come to it armed<sup>23</sup>. But the resentment of the nation had become too strong for his control. The clergy united with the rest of the public; the barons fortified their castles<sup>24</sup>; and the people were visibly disposed to support their leaders. Edward at last, alarmed at his own danger, consented that his favourite should again leave the kingdom. The archbishop threatened an excommunication if he delayed<sup>25</sup>; when Edward, resolving that he should not go in disgrace, appointed him viceroy of Ireland, and sent him with a force sufficient to enable him

<sup>19</sup> Mon. Malm. 110.

<sup>20</sup> Ib. and Trok. 6.

<sup>21</sup> Walter de Whytlessee, one of the monks of Peterboro', gives us a remarkable instance of this: When the King, with Gaveston, visited that place, the abbot sent him a cup worth fifty pounds. The King immediately inquired, whether Peter had received any present? and being answered in the negative, he refused to accept the gift. The abbot hearing of this, sent to Gaveston a cup of the value of forty pounds, who took it, with a courteous air, and thanks. The messenger then asking the favourite, if the other cup was worthy of the King's acceptance? and

being told it was, he mentioned to Peter, that it had been refused. Gaveston called his chamberlain, and gave him these orders: 'Go to lord Edward, and tell him that I am willing that he should receive the abbot's present.' The officer carried the rejected cup to Edward with this message, and the King then eagerly took it, and thanked the abbot for his liberality. Wal. Whytt. Cenob. Burg. Hist. p. 171.

<sup>22</sup> Mon. Malm. 98.

<sup>23</sup> Plac. Parl. vol. 1. pp. 445 & 447.

<sup>24</sup> Mon. Malm. 99.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. 100.

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III.REIGN OF  
EDWARD II.Marries the  
king's niece.

him to acquire some military reputation<sup>26</sup>; a vain expectation. If he had possessed the judgment that was requisite to gain success in war, he would not have been driven from the English court. His first advantages were succeeded by disaster. He lavished the royal revenues of the country in wasteful expenditure; and his Irish government only impoverished his sovereign, and increased the public hatred<sup>27</sup>.

Edward, with a strange imbecility, pined in his absence, and thought anxiously how to recal him. It was suggested, that if he married him to his own niece, the sister of the earl of Gloucester, the alliance, by connecting him with the royal family, would give him a footing among the nobles of the land, and protect him from their hostility. The project was accomplished; and the barons paused, to see if the new connexion and his late humiliation would change his offensive conduct<sup>28</sup>. It is the opinion of an author who lived at the time, and who writes with a considerable degree of feeling on the subject, that if Gaveston had but conducted himself prudently and unostentatiously; or if the king, preserving his attachment to his friend, had but behaved with due consideration to his nobles; their opposition would have ceased<sup>29</sup>. But the arrogance and avarice of Gaveston, and the infatuation of his sovereign, continuing, the barons assembled with the commons in parliament, and Gaveston was criminally arraigned<sup>30</sup>. He was sentenced to

perpetual

<sup>26</sup> Moor, 593.

<sup>27</sup> Mon. Malm. p. 100.—Ad. Murimuth says, that he lived in Ireland royally; was very liberal, and much beloved there. p. 40.

<sup>28</sup> Trok. p. 8. That this marriage had the effect of strengthening Gaveston, is the opinion of the Mon. Malm. p. 96.

<sup>29</sup> Mon. Malm. 110.

<sup>30</sup> The charges against him are stated in the Parliamentary Roll, printed in Plac. Parl. 281. They may be briefly enumerated

thus: Badly counselling the king; obtaining his treasure, and sending it out of the kingdom; drawing to himself the royal power and dignity; “seigneurant” on the king’s state; alienating the king from his people; despising their advice; not suffering good ministers to make the law of the land; displacing them, and putting his creatures in their stead; taking the king’s lands to himself; giving the crown lands to others; leading the king to war without the assent of his par-



perpetual exile; and it was ordered, that if he remained in England, he should be treated as an enemy to the king, to the kingdom, and to the people. Others were punished with him<sup>31</sup>; and among these, a lady accused of abusing the king's favour, was ordered to her house, and forbidden to approach the court<sup>32</sup>.

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Gaveston  
banished.

The parliament now considered it necessary to interfere itself with the administration of the executive government. The barons and the commons passed ordinances, certainly trenching on the royal prerogatives, but occasioned by the previous misconduct. In order to discharge the king's debts, it was enacted, that no grant of lands should be valid without their assent, and that all preceding grants should be recalled. The king was restrained from going out of the kingdom, or making war, without the approbation of the barons in parliament. All evil counsellors were to be removed. The chancellor, chief justice, treasurer, chancellor and chief baron of the exchequer, and other great officers, were to be chosen by him with the advice of his barons in parliament. Various other regulations were added; and it was also declared, that parliaments should be held once in every year, or twice, if need be, and in a suitable place<sup>33</sup>. Some of these provisions were innovations on the royal authority, and imply a strong mistrust of the royal capacity. But the whole tenor of Edward's reign too clearly proves the justice of this severe imputation.

Ordinances of  
Parliament.

Gaveston, unable to confront the storm which he had provoked, withdrew

parliament; maintaining robbers, homicides, &c.; sealing blank charters with the great seal, to the deceit and disinheritation of the crown. Parl. Plac. p. 283.

<sup>31</sup> As, p. 283, "Emori Friscanbaud," mentioned in the preceding Note (18.)

<sup>32</sup> This was la dame de Vesey, qui ad procure le roi a doner a sire Henri de Beaumont

son frere et as autres, terres, franchises et baillies, au damage et deshonor du roi et aperte desheriteson de la corone, et ausint procure de maunder hors lettres desouz la targe contre lei et l'ententione du roi. Plac. Parl. 284.

<sup>33</sup> See these Ordinationes at length, from the Parl. Rolls in Plac. Parl. 281—286.

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Gaveston  
returns;

withdrew to France. The king of that country ordering him to be seized<sup>34</sup>, he retired to Flanders. But a life of difficulty and obscurity was insupportable to a man spoilt by royal favour and courtly luxuries. He suddenly returned to England, and moved from place to place, sometimes secreted in the king's chamber, anxious to emerge into his former splendour, but pursued too vindictively<sup>35</sup> to dare it. He tried to obtain an asylum in Scotland, but was refused<sup>36</sup>. At last, weary of lying hid like a felon, and trusting to the king's fondness and power, he ventured desperately on a public appearance at court, and was received by Edward with undissembled transport.

The enraged barons assembled again, and the archbishop of Canterbury excommunicated Gaveston. The earl of Lancaster proclaimed a tournament, as a legal pretext for his friends meeting in arms; and every necessary being collected, they moved to York<sup>37</sup>. Edward had placed his favourite in the strong castle at Bamburg<sup>38</sup>. The barons dispersed abroad, that there could be no peace in the realm, that the king would have no treasure, nor the queen her becoming honours, nor the great their suitable rank and consideration, while Gaveston was alive. They made the earl of Lancaster, a nobleman of the royal blood, their leader; whose father-in-law, on his death-bed, had exhorted him to protect the freedom of the people, the liberties of the church, and to be dutiful to the king, yet to remove from him all bad ministers, and to support Magna Charta and the articles of regulation<sup>39</sup>.

They

<sup>34</sup> Trok. p. 9.

<sup>35</sup> Among our public records, we still have the writ de scrutando P. G. latitantem in Devon. Cornw. Somers. et Dors. against the form of the ordinances of the nobles and king.—The Monk intimates, that he was sometimes in the king's palace, sometimes at Wallingford, and sometimes in Tintagel castle. p. 117.

<sup>36</sup> The Scottish king's answer was, "How

can the king of England keep his treaty with me, if he does not keep his oath to his own liege men!" Mon. Malm. p. 118.

<sup>37</sup> Mon. Malm. 119.

<sup>38</sup> Th. Moor, p. 593.

<sup>39</sup> Trok. p. 13. The dying earl reminded him, that he had already three counties, and with his daughter would have two more; so that Lancaster was now supported by the force of five English counties.



They presented their petitions to their sovereign, who, refusing all compliance, sailed from York to Newcastle. The barons followed. The king withdrew, with his Peter, to Tinnmouth<sup>40</sup>. The barons soon reached that town; and as they entered it, the king, heedless of the tears of his pregnant queen, refused to part with Gaveston, and hurried with him into a ship, and sailed down to Scarborough<sup>41</sup>. The castle was strong, but it had no provisions; and the barons again advancing, the king was compelled to leave him to his fate, and to withdraw to York<sup>42</sup>. To save his life, Edward promised to comply with all the petitions of the irritated nobles; and the earl of Pembroke swore to keep him safe till a specified day, that in the interval some negotiations might be entered into for his preservation<sup>43</sup>. On the road to Wallingford, with his prisoner, Pembroke rested at the village of Dadington, between Oxford and Warwick. "You are fatigued," said the earl to him, "and need refreshment; I have business; you may remain here till I return:" and left him under the care of a slender guard<sup>44</sup>. At the dawn of day, the earl of Warwick, whom he had called the 'black dog of Ardern,' came with a small retinue to the village, summoned his chamberlain, and bade him rouse his master from his bed. The alarmed favourite was compelled to obey, and to follow the vindictive earl on foot. His pace being slow, he was placed on a mule, to travel faster; and he was carried in insulting triumph to Warwick, amid sounding horns and a shouting populace<sup>45</sup>.

Taken by the  
barons;

Pembroke, hearing of this movement, sued for his deliverance, pleading his own oath and danger. Gloucester answered him, that  
Warwick

<sup>40</sup> Trok. 15.

<sup>41</sup> Ib. 16.—Lancaster sent a message of respect and consolation to the queen, but would not visit her, lest that should excite the king's anger to her prejudice. Ib.

<sup>42</sup> Trok. 17.

<sup>43</sup> Moor, 593. Trok. 17.

<sup>44</sup> Mon. Malm. 120. Trok. 17.

<sup>45</sup> Mon. Malm. 121. Moor, 593. and Trok. 17.

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Killed by  
the earl of  
Lancaster's  
command.

Warwick had acted by the general advice, and that he must abide the chances of his own peril. Pembroke then went to Oxford, soliciting the clergy and citizens there to aid him in recovering Gaveston. They declined to interfere; and Warwick announced to Peter, that he must die that day. Humbled and trembling, he threw himself at the earl of Lancaster's feet, exclaiming, "Generous earl! pity me." But his previous sarcasms had blunted the earl's compassionate feelings. The only answer he received was the stern and vindictive command, "Take him away, take him away!" and he was led into the earl's county, that the meditated violence might be committed in the territory of a nobleman, whose power and relationship to the crown might best confront its future indignation. He was there delivered to two Welshmen. One stabbed him, the other severed his head. His death was not believed till the head was exhibited. The barons then dispersed; and some friars coming from Oxford, removed the body, to be buried in that city<sup>46</sup>. A deed like this, whatever may have been Gaveston's demerits, was a foul and revengeful murder; and Lancaster lived to experience the severe retaliation, which the wilful shedding of human blood usually produces<sup>47</sup>.

Piers Gaveston is described to have had some interesting qualities<sup>48</sup>, which might have made him useful both to the king and people, if he had not been ruined by courtly pomp, and been seduced,

<sup>46</sup> Mon. Malm. 121—124. Moor, 593. Ad. Murim. 44.

<sup>47</sup> The reflection of the Monk of Malmsbury on his death, is remarkable for that age: "Let the English courtiers beware, lest, trusting to the king's favour, they should despise the barons (the Parliament.) These are a principal member of the kingdom, without whom the king can attempt or execute nothing great. Hence they who undervalue the barons,

despise the king, and shew themselves guilty of treason." Mon. Malm. p. 124.

<sup>48</sup> The Scala Chronica says of him, that at first he was "noble, liberal and gentil, in summe fascions." 2 Lel. 545. And Ad. Murimuth, having intimated that he was much loved in Ireland, adds, "for he was splendid and bountiful in giving presents, and in procuring honours and lands for his adherents." p. 40.



seduced, by the king's womanish fondness, to an absurd and childish arrogance<sup>49</sup>. As the nation was becoming too fierce and warlike, from the martial spirit and ambition of Edward I. the elegant accomplishments of Gaveston were adapted to soften and civilize the public manners; and, from the six years continuance of his power, probably left some serviceable impressions on the court and nation. His death, from the general dissatisfaction which his own foolish humours had excited, was received with much popular exultation, though it appears to have astonished many at the boldness of the crime. It was a new thing thus to brave the power and provoke the resentment of a king of England, not only by rebellion, but by destroying his chosen favourite<sup>50</sup>. It brought the king and the parliament again to a measured trial of their strength; and the issue must have been critical to English liberty, if the cause of the quarrel had been less universally unpopular.

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The king was with reason indignant at the catastrophe, and at the breach of faith which had accompanied it<sup>51</sup>. Some counselled him to moderate measures; but the friends of Gaveston, of whom Hugh le Despenser was one, stimulated him to revenge. He called out his knights to arms, garrisoned his castles, collected his

The King's  
indignation.

<sup>49</sup> The Monk of Malsbury solemnly asserts, "I believe and firmly declare, that if Peter had from the beginning conducted himself, towards the great, prudently and respectfully, none of them would have opposed him." p. 110. What a lesson to pride, and to favourites! But perhaps before any man can become a *favourite* of a prince, both must be equally unworthy. Judicious friendship is honourable and beneficial to the throne; favouritism implies imbecility.

<sup>50</sup> The Monk of Malsbury remarks, "In killing Peter, an arduous enterprise was undertaken; nor has any thing like it happened in our days. They killed the great count,

whom the king adopted to be a brother, loved as a son, and made his friend and companion. It was therefore necessary that he should be great, who could defend such a deed. Hence Thomas earl of Lancaster, as nobler and more potent than all, took on himself the peril, and ordered Peter, after being thrice banished, to be killed." p. 124.

<sup>51</sup> Ad. Mur. thus describes the king's feelings: "The King remained tranquil, but dissembling; vexed at the death of Gaveston, and meditating a revenge, which, when the opportunity afterwards came, he did not spare." p. 45.

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his archers, assembled his military force, and then summoned the barons to parliament. They came to London, like men prepared to encounter hostility. Lancaster appeared with 1000 knights and 1500 foot; Hereford with a host of wild Welsh salvages; Warwick with all his men of Arderne; and the other barons with the greatest power they could collect. Such a parliament was too formidable to be attacked. The barons did not go immediately to the king, but sent to announce their coming, and to inquire the cause of their being convened. The earl of Gloucester interfered as a mediator. They disclaimed all intention of disrespect to the king, but avowed their suspicion of his advisers. Edward at last desired to know their wishes. They answered, the confirmation of the ordinances, and his remission of all penalties for Gaveston's death. The king assented to the pardon, on the condition that his late favourite was not adjudged to be a traitor. They replied, that this exception would leave them exposed to legal prosecution. The king would not concede farther; and the barons, perceiving that he sought by protraction to exhaust them by their expenses, withdrew to their homes<sup>51</sup>. Edward went to France, on the invitation of its sovereign, to be present at the festivities on the investment of the king of Navarre with the military belt<sup>52</sup>. The quarrel with the barons was at last terminated<sup>53</sup>; and the next great incident of this reign was the calamitous battle of Bannockburn,

<sup>51</sup> This detail is given with much probable minuteness by the Mon. Malm. 125—134. He seems to have penned down his narration and reflections at the very time, for he adds soon afterwards, on the king going to France, "May God bring him back safe!—Lo, our king has now reigned six years, and yet has done nothing hitherto worthy of either praise or remembrance, except that he has married royally, and obtained an heir to his kingdom." p. 135.

<sup>52</sup> Mon. Malm. 134.—In 1312, Edw. III. was born at Windsor. Moor, 593.

<sup>53</sup> Some of the records of the king's pardons for Gaveston's death are in the Rotul. Parl. pp. 74—76. The Monk of Malmsbury here gives an effusion of his contemporary feelings, for he suddenly exclaims, "Mightiest God! remove all false and perfidious men from our Sovereign." p. 140.



burn, which closed the reign of Bruce with glory, and astonished England with an unexpected defeat.

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Edward, instead of leading into Scotland the forces which his father had so anxiously collected for its subjection, abandoned the invasion. He attempted afterwards an ineffectual incursion. But in 1313, when Robert Bruce had taken Edinburgh and was besieging Stirling, he resolved on a powerful aggression. He summoned his barons to attend him: they answered, that parliament ought to be first assembled. The king declared the necessity to be urgent: they replied, that if they accompanied him to the war without the assent of parliament, they should violate the ordinances. The king preferring, as usual, prerogative to policy, commanded their services. To avoid his vindictive measures many went, but some only sent their forces<sup>54</sup>.

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He marched in great power to Scotland, and with moderate good conduct must have been irresistible. It is interesting to observe how superior power can be defeated by superior intelligence. Bruce, whom even his enemies praise<sup>55</sup>, met the peril like a consummate general. He could not hope to beat the English cavalry, and therefore did not attempt it<sup>56</sup>. He dismounted all his own horse, and formed his forces into an army of foot. They were about 40,000 men. He divided them into three bodies; none on horseback. Each man wore a light armour, which a sword could not easily pierce; battle-axes were at their sides, and lances in their hands. He compacted them into a thick mass, a bristled hedge<sup>57</sup>, like the Macedonian phalanx, which from its union and solidity was impenetrable. To secure them

Battle of  
Bannock-  
burn.

<sup>54</sup> Mon. Malm. 144—146.

<sup>55</sup> The Monk says, "I should praise Robert Bruce, if his being guilty of homicide and treason did not make me silent." 107.

<sup>56</sup> Trokelowe says, the battle of Falkirk had taught the Scotch the inferiority of their

horse, p. 25. The Scala Chronica observes, that the recent victory of the Flemings over the French at Courtray, had given Bruce an example, that cavalry might be defeated by infantry. 2 Let. 547.

<sup>57</sup> Mon. Malm. 149. Trok. 29.

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from the first assault of the English cavalry, he employed the night in digging ditches along his line, from right to left, three feet deep and broad, which he covered with hurdles strewed with turf, strong enough for his foot to pass over, but weak enough to break under the weight of a horse<sup>57</sup>. In a reconnoitring skirmish, on the day preceding the great conflict, he had the advantage, and displayed his personal strength and valour; and his success alarmed the English into a belief that he meditated a night attack. This conjecture kept them watching; and the day happening to be a festival, they passed the night in carousing<sup>58</sup>. In the morning, the veteran chiefs advised the king, on account of the fatigue of a sleepless night and the effects of their festivity, to defer the battle till the morrow. The younger men derided the counsel. The earl of Gloucester enforced it. The king had the weakness to call him a traitor for his prudence. "You shall see to-day," he indignantly answered, "that I am neither a traitor nor a coward<sup>59</sup>."

24 June  
1314.

The English were formed in three lines, one, of their knights, another their infantry and archers, the third with the king and clergy. Bruce refreshed his troops with bread and wine<sup>60</sup>, and harangued them on topics calculated to increase their resolution<sup>61</sup>. He placed himself in the front of the army on foot, that his example

<sup>57</sup> Moor, 594.

<sup>58</sup> Moor says, there were vino madentes, wassaile and drinkehaile, plus solito intonantes. p. 594.

<sup>59</sup> Mon. Malm. 149.

<sup>60</sup> Ib.—Moor describes them as "burning with the love of liberty and their country." p. 594.

<sup>61</sup> Barbour indulges his eloquence on this speech, l. 12. pp. 129—133. His topics are judicious—

The fyrst is, that we haiff the rycht,  
And for the rycht, ay God will fycht.

His next was, that the English had brought

- - - - - rycht till our hand  
Ryches into sa gret quantite  
That the powerest of yow sall be  
Bath ryche, and mychty tharwithall,  
Giff that we wyne, as weill may fall.

His third point was,

The thred is, that we for our lyvys,  
And for our childre and for our wyvis;  
And for ovr fredome, and for our land,  
As strenyeit into bataill stand. p. 130.



example might prevent any one from thinking of flight<sup>62</sup>. He felt the greatness of the moment, and his soul was equal to the emergency.

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The tumult of battles is so great, the events so rapid and various, and they are seen from such different points of view, that several accounts of the same conflict will be often dissimilar to each other. Hence the battle of Bannockburn is told with different circumstances by the Scotch and English writers<sup>63</sup>. The main incidents in the latter are, that the English knights began the struggle with the sun shining on their gilt shields and burnished helms, instead of waiting till noon, when the sun would have turned to their right<sup>64</sup>. That the earl of Gloucester, impatient of the king's taunt, advanced to meet the body under Douglas too eagerly, to have the credit of the first blow; that his horse being killed, he fell, and, from the weight of his armour, could not rise unassisted. That his knightly companions, astonished at his disaster, hesitated<sup>65</sup>, and one only, who had fought in Germany, seeing the king about to retreat, cried out, that he was not used to fly<sup>66</sup>, and, letting go the king's bridle, which he was holding, rushed to the earl's succour, but was overpowered and killed<sup>67</sup>. That the English cavalry, also charging on the Scots, the horses stumbled on the treacherous turf, and threw their riders on the Scottish lances. That the second line increased the evil; for, seeing the enemy rush on, they discharged their arrows, which fell on the unarmed backs of the struggling English knights; and that, alarmed at the general confusion, Edward was advised to quit the field.

<sup>62</sup> Trok. 26.

<sup>63</sup> Mon. Malm. 149, 150.

<sup>64</sup> Barbour's account is in the last part of his twelfth and the beginning of his thirteenth book. Lord Hailes for the most part adopts it; vol. 2. pp. 45—49.

<sup>65</sup> Scala Chron. p. 547. This was Sir Giles Argentyr.

<sup>67</sup> Mon. Malm.—Barbour notices this incident, l. 13. p. 156.

<sup>66</sup> Moor, 594.

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field<sup>68</sup>. A gleam of his father's spirit seems at this moment to have lightened in his feeble soul; for it is added, that, in a state of fury at the disaster, he rushed on the Scots like a lioness robbed of her whelps, till he was carried off by his knights, who saw that he was in danger of being taken<sup>69</sup>.

Defeat of the  
English.

The defeat was irretrievable. At the sight of the royal banner quitting the field, the army dispersed in panic. Resistance was at an end. Flight, pursuit, and destruction, ensued. The king vowed to the Virgin, that if he got safely away, he would build a convent for the poor Carmelites<sup>70</sup>; and he sought to take refuge in an adjoining castle, but the drawbridge was raised against him, and he was compelled to pass on. This refusal was deemed a treason, but it proved to be his preservation; for if he had made it his asylum, he would have been taken. Repulsed here, this degenerate son of a magnanimous father fled onward with the younger Spenser, reached Dunbar, and there, getting into a ship, sailed precipitately to Berwick.

No defeat could be more disgraceful. The knights, throwing off their armour, fled half naked over the country, and were pursued for fifty miles<sup>71</sup>. The slaughter was proportionably great. The Scots took baggage to the value of 200,000 pounds, and a great number of noble captives, whose ransoms made them affluent<sup>72</sup>. Bruce distinguished himself for his humanity to the prisoners. He distributed the spoil with magnificent liberality; and by this brilliant success completed the independence of Scotland, and the security of his hard-earned throne<sup>73</sup>.

The

<sup>68</sup> Moor, 594.

<sup>69</sup> Trokelowe mentions this circumstance, p. 27; and the *Scala Chronica* says, "The King in chafe foute sore, and had his horse paunched, but he got another," p. 547.

<sup>70</sup> Moor, 594. "To this vow, Oriel college in Oxford owes its establishment." Haile's *Annals*, 2. p. 49.

<sup>71</sup> Mon. Malm. 151.

<sup>72</sup> The earl of Gloucester would not have been killed, but that he went into the field without his "*toga propriæ armaturæ*," and therefore was not recognized. Moor, 594.

<sup>73</sup> Trokelowe, 28. The Latin rhimer of this period, Robert of Baston, composed two poems



The remainder of Edward's reign was a repetition of the errors of its commencement. Hugh de Spenser, who had been in the train of Gaveston, became another favourite, and succeeding to his influence, and untaught by his catastrophe, adopted his follies and misconduct. The king became again at variance with his barons; and Spenser and his father were the objects of the popular animosity<sup>74</sup>. They fell its victims, but not till the great leader of the barons, the earl of Lancaster, had preceded them to the tomb.

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This potent and applauded nobleman ruined his popularity by his conduct at the siege of Berwick. In 1319, the Scots made a bold irruption into Yorkshire, to surprise the queen. They missed that booty, but Berwick was betrayed to them. The king advanced to recover it; but Lancaster suddenly withdrawing with his forces from the royal camp, the king failed in his attempt, and the Scots reached their homes unhurt. A great national clamour arose at this event, and public rumour said, that the earl had been bribed by Bruce with 40,000 pounds to favour his escape. Other accounts refer the secession of Lancaster to his resentment at the king's announcing his intention to make the obnoxious Spenser the governor of the city. There can be no doubt that the king's friends industriously kept up the outcry of treachery, for it was their interest to do so; but the manner in which the Monk of Malmesbury speaks of it, shews that this opinion became the public

Earl of  
Lancaster  
becomes  
unpopular.

poems on the Scottish wars; the one containing 28 and the other 66 quatrains of Latin rhyme: These are in the Cotton Library, Titus A 20.

<sup>74</sup> A singular mode was used to apprise the king of the public discontent: "As he was dining in Westminster-hall, a woman entered it on horseback, dressed like the minstrels, and, going round the table in their manner, presented to the king a letter, and, turning her bridle, departed. The porters were

blamed for admitting her; they alleged, that it was not the king's custom to refuse admission to minstrels at his festivities. She was pursued and taken, and owned that a knight had employed her. The knight being questioned, told the king, that he had taken that course to apprise him that he was neglecting the knights who had served so faithfully both his father and himself, and was enriching others who had not borne the burthen of the day." *Trok.* pp. 39, 40.

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public sentiment<sup>75</sup>. The earl, alarmed at the general feeling against him, went to the king, and offered to purge himself from the imputation, by the hot iron, or by battle. His purgation was admitted, but his popularity was gone. He was now unexpectedly lowered to the level of his enemies attack.

1320. It was the continued character, and the defect of the king's mind, to form an attachment to his favourites, that seemed to his subjects like an enchantment; and this unlimited power over their sovereign, fostered in them a spirit of arrogance, and an expression of disdain towards others, which English barons would not brook. The nobles found themselves denied access to their sovereign by the younger Spenser, or received, through him, in answer to their applications, harsh and adverse answers<sup>76</sup>. Their general discontent united them into a vindictive confederacy: and as in that age the great were always in the attitude of warfare, they directed their military retainers to attack the estates of the minister's father, in Wales and the Marches; they destroyed his woods, and plundered his moveables; and threatened so fiercely the lives of both the Spensers, that they thought it necessary to evade the storm by flight. The barons met in parliament at Westminster; and the king was compelled to assent to the banishment of his favourite<sup>77</sup>.

The Spensers  
banished.

1321. An insult to the queen, which made the barons unpopular, restored the king's power. Approaching a castle of one of the confederated nobles, she was refused permission to pass the night there.

<sup>75</sup> He utters a series of indignant apostrophes against the earl, as if he believed the charge. pp. 198, 199.

<sup>76</sup> Ad. Mur. p. 55. Moor, p. 595. He says candidly, "I confess these errors in Hugh, but not as the vulgar talked of them, who studied by their fictions to shew greater

crimes, and to make their bad actions worse than they were."

<sup>77</sup> Moor, 595.—Pakington describes the elder Spenser as cursing his son as the cause of his disgrace; and the younger as robbing on the sea during his exile, and taking out of two ships, about Sandwich, goods to the value of £.40,000. p. 463.



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there. This disrespectful rudeness roused the yet chivalrous feelings of the age; and knights and forces assembled round the king in sufficient number, to enable him to take the castle, and to proceed afterwards through various parts of the country, apprehending some of the opposing barons, and recovering the submission of others. He sent his captives to the Tower; and in a subsequent parliament, procured a revocation of the exile of the Spencers<sup>78</sup>.

The king advancing in strength against the Northern chieftains, they found themselves unable to withstand him. The question of submission was discussed. It was urged with reproach against Lancaster, that he might submit with safety, because, being a prince of the royal blood, he would find easy grace; but that to them, loss of life, liberty, or property, must be the consequence of surrender. The earl of Hereford, yielding, against his judgment, to their feelings, attempted a battle with the royal troops. The lance of a crafty Welshman, thrust suddenly up a crevice in the bridge on which Hereford was standing, pierced his bowels. The defeat of his friends quickly followed his disaster. Lancaster, and ninety-five of the chief barons, baronets, and knights, were taken<sup>79</sup>. His consanguinity to the crown was no protection against the king's resentment: he was treated as contemptuously as he had behaved to Gaveston<sup>80</sup>. Eighteen of his friends were drawn and quartered, the rest banished or imprisoned<sup>81</sup>. He was carried to Pomfret, underwent the form of a hasty trial, without the opportunity of defence, and was hurried, with every mark of disrespect, to a scaffold.

Lancaster  
taken, and  
killed.

<sup>78</sup> Moor, 595.—Trokelow remarks, that the affair of the castle hurt the cause of the barons. p. 52.

<sup>79</sup> Moor, 596. "And then wente Thomas Lancastre into a chapel denying to rendre hymself to Harkeley, and said, looking on the crucifix, 'Good Lord, I rendre myself to

the and put me into thy mercy.'" W. Paking. Chron. p. 464.

<sup>80</sup> "Then they toke off his cote armoires, and put on hym a ray cote or goune, one of his mennes lyveryes, and caried hym by water to York, were they threw balles of dyrte at hym." Pak. Chron. 464.

<sup>81</sup> Pak. Chron. 465.

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scaffold<sup>82</sup>. Power, feeling too strongly what it is able to accomplish, is apt to consider too little how much only it is prudent to attempt. The capture of Lancaster afforded to the crown an opportunity of displaying a wise spirit of liberal conciliation, that would have increased the humiliation of its enemy, and have strengthened itself; by destroying him, the government gave a sympathy and a sanctity to his memory, which made his death a formidable evil. The mount on which he suffered, became a consecrated place; and a military force was necessary to keep off the popular veneration<sup>83</sup>.

Edward appointed the elder Spenser earl of Winchester, and the younger, earl of Gloucester, and attempted an invasion of Scotland. Aware of his superior force, the Scots retreated beyond their firths, destroying all the provisions of the country, which they evacuated. Want of food, forced the king to retire. The Scots warily followed him by secret night marches, and made a bold attempt to surprise his camp. The king, ignorant of their vicinity, had scarcely time to escape, and his army was dispersed. His pursuers spread themselves over Yorkshire, ravaging it with fire and sword, and returned home laden with booty<sup>84</sup>.

1323.

The Spensers, continuing to strike down their enemies, confiscated the property of the bishop of Hereford, as an alleged supporter

<sup>82</sup> Pakington has preserved a few circumstances of his fate. "On his hasty judgment, he said, 'Shaul I dy withowt answer.' Then a certayne Gascoyne toke hym away, and put a pillid broken hatte or hoode on his hedde, and set hym on a lene white jade withowt bridil, and he than cryed thus, 'King of Heven, have mercy on me, for the king of herth nous ad .querpi.' And thus he was caryed, sum throuing pelottes of dyrt at hym, and having a frerer precher for his confessor with hym, on to a hylle withowte the toune, where he knelid doune

toward the Este, ontylle one Hughin de Muston caussid hym to turne his face toward Scotlande, where kneling, a villayne of London cut of his hedde. 11 Cal. Ap. 1321." Chron. p. 465.

<sup>83</sup> In Pakington's Chronicle, was "A chapitre of the Miracles that men sayde that God wrought for Thomas a Lancastre." "And for resorte of people to the monte where Thomas was beheddid, Baldok the chauncelar caussid 13 Gascoynes well armed to watch the hille a certen tyme." p. 466.

<sup>84</sup> Moor, 596.



supporter of Mortimer, one of the revolting barons. The prelate is described as a man of great worldly sagacity; daring; heedless of the means by which he reached his ends; and now provoked to a settled hatred, both of the sovereign and his minister. He applied himself to revive the party of the barons. They found the royal favour still unattainable, but through the channels of the Spensers, whose ambition and rapacity so much increased with their power, that it was remarked, that England had three kings instead of one<sup>85</sup>. The favourites even ventured to abridge the state and luxuries of the queen. Their insolence, and the king's preferring attachment to them, filled her breast with contempt and hatred for her husband. The pride of the only daughter and presumptive successor of the king of France was deeply wounded, to find herself married to a man who grudged her the expenditure to which she had been accustomed; and who subjected his queen to be, like a handmaid, dependent on the bounty of his favourites. She entered deeply into the counsels of the disaffected. She was advised, by the subtle bishop, to seek a fair occasion of going to France, and of planning with her brother the destruction of the Spensers. The king had meditated the journey, to appease the subjects of discord that were rising between the two countries; but his ministers, equally afraid of being left in England without him, and of accompanying him to France, where they would be in the power of the queen's brother, dissuaded him from going. Her blandishments at last persuaded him to let her be the negociator. She went to Paris; and he established himself, during the spring and summer, on the nearest sea coast of England, to receive her letters and expresses more quickly<sup>86</sup>. The

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Conspiracy  
against the  
king.

Queen's visit  
to Paris.

<sup>85</sup> We have an instance of the Spensers' violence, on the Parliam. Rolls: As a knight was standing in the cathedral at Lincoln, the younger Spenser came up to him, and, because he had arrested one of the minister's household, struck him so fiercely in the face

with his fist, that the blood followed. The knight drew his sword; but further consequences were prevented, and the matter came before parliament. p. 352.

<sup>86</sup> Moor, 597.

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The king of France, on the pretence of Edward's disobedience to his summons for homage, had begun to seize his French possessions. After the visit of the English queen, her brother proposed to invest her son with the disputed territory, if his father would resign it to the young prince, and send him to do fealty for it. Edward was advised to take his son over with him, and not to trust him to French duplicity. The interest of the Spencers again urged them to keep the king in England; and the young Edward was sent to France with the required cession, where he did homage to his French uncle, and received the possession of the Duchy of Aquitaine<sup>87</sup>.

1325. The king now desired the queen to return with her son. She pleaded her brother's kindness or compulsion as an excuse for her protracted stay. Mortimer had escaped from the Tower<sup>88</sup>, joined her councils in France, and was suspected of an unbecoming intimacy. Instead of revisiting England, she went to Hainault, and, without waiting for the king's permission, or the assent of parliament, she contracted for her son a marriage with Philippa, the daughter of its duke. She levied there an army from Hainault and Germany, whom she paid out of the dowry of the bride, and, making the count of Hainault, and Mortimer, its commanders, she sailed adventurously to England, and landed, about Michaelmas, at Orwell, on the Suffolk coast<sup>89</sup>.

She lands in  
England.

Invasions like these are never dangerous, unless where extensive discontent pervades a country, and has excited a desire of change. The sentiment of loyalty, then, having ceased, its practice becomes

<sup>87</sup> Moor, 597.

<sup>88</sup> His escape is thus described by Henry de Blandford: In the middle of a stormy night, having lulled his keepers by a banquet, in which a sleeping-draught was administered, finding the chamber-door secured with many fastenings, he broke through the wall

into the kitchen; he got out at the top of that, and by cords made into a sort of ladder, provided by his friends, he descended, reached the Thames, obtained a boat, and, sailing boldly out to sea, landed on the Continent. H. Blandf. p. 84.

<sup>89</sup> Moor, 598.



becomes a subject of individual policy and public dispute, generally prevailing only while law has power. The conscientious, always the minority, become neutral; and the moderate, usually the least active, give way to the impetuous, the turbulent, and the enterprising. Ministers, misled by a confidence in their apparent strength, neglect the only true foundation of their safety, the diminution of their unpopularity, by a removal of its causes. In the present case they had relied on the command of the executive sword, and saw the increase of the public displeasure with proud contempt or obstinate incredulity. The progress of the queen dispersed their delusion. Disaffection spread with contagious activity, and magnified her force; tales, that the Pope had absolved all the King's subjects from their loyalty, and excommunicated her opposers, spread largely before her<sup>89</sup>; every one pursued his own inclinations, and the high and the low, the clergy and the barons, eagerly joined her in all parts. The king and his ministers in this important hour of trial found no friends. The elder Spenser flew to Bristol Castle, as his refuge: and the younger accompanied Edward to Chepstow, hoping to reach the fertile and well stored isle of Conday in the Severn, where a defensive station might be made<sup>90</sup>, from its impregnable position; but the adverse winds precluded approach; and the king, driven by the tempest to the coast of Glamorgan, projected to take shelter in the Abbey of Neath. The queen's pursuit was unintermitted. Her army, continually increasing, passed from Oxford to Gloucester; while the citizens of London rose into insurrection against the king's friends, seized the Tower, liberated its prisoners, beheaded the bishop of Exeter who had espoused the royal cause,

<sup>89</sup> Moor, 598. In confirmation of this falsehood, two cardinals were said to be accompanying the queen. *lb.*

<sup>90</sup> Moor describes it as two miles in diameter, of fertile pasture, abounding in rabbits, pigeons, and with fresh water. It had

only one entrance, which was so narrow, that two men, with their feet close together, could hardly pass it. The rest of its circuit was inaccessible rock. It was well provided, as if in anticipation of some disaster, with all sorts of provisions. p. 599.

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cause, and committed the usual excesses of a tumultuary movement <sup>91</sup>.

From Gloucester she proceeded to Bristol, where the elder Spenser surrendered speedily to her summons. She gratified her cruel revenge, by his torture and death. Advancing to Hereford, she rested there a month, and sent one part of her forces, under the earl of Lancaster, son of the preceding earl, and a Welshman, to seize the king and his adherents. They found them at Neath Abbey. The king was taken and conveyed to Kenilworth Castle, where he was served all the winter, with a ceremony suited to his dignity. The younger Spenser was executed with the loathsome ceremonies then accompanying treason; and many of his supporters suffered by imprisonment and death <sup>92</sup>.

The rapid success of the queen and her partisans, announce the universal discontent of the nation at the administration which had preceded. A parliament was held in London, which ordered, that on the part of the whole kingdom, three bishops, two earls, two abbots, four barons, two knights of every county, and two burgesses of the cities and county towns and cinque ports, should repair to Kenilworth, where the king was confined. The bishops outstripped the others, and, by threats and persuasions, strove to persuade the king to resign his crown to his son. After many promises that he should continue to receive the same royal respect, and many bursts of vexation and resentment, the agitated prince assented. The other deputies had then assembled, and were introduced. The king came out of his inner apartment, clothed

<sup>91</sup> Moor, 599.—Pakington, after noticing the bishop's violences which had excited it, adds, that they buried him and his two esquires "yn the hepe of rubusche aboute his toure, as they had ben dogges. And no marvel; for he was fumisch and without pite." p. 468.

<sup>92</sup> Moor, 600.—They put on Spenser and the chancellor's heads "chapelettes of poig-nante netles: and this writing was sette on Spenser's briste, in greate lettres, 'Quid gloriaris in malitia? Qui potens est in iniquitate,'" Pak. 468.



clothed in a black gown, but was so overcome by his feelings, that he fell senseless on the floor. They raised him, and brought him back to life and recollection; and the prelate of Hereford mentioned the purpose for which they attended, adding, that on his refusal to surrender the diadem to his son, they would choose another sovereign. The king, with tears, expressed his grief that his people should be so exasperated against him as to be weary of his reign; but at last consented that his son should be substituted for him. The deputies then, by one of the knights, in the name of the whole kingdom, renounced their fealty and allegiance to him, and the steward of his household, breaking his rod, resigned his office and discharged his retinue.

Parliament being again assembled, confirmed the resignation, and raised the young prince, then eleven years old, to the crown, by the title of Edward III. A dower was assigned to the queen, so ample, that scarcely one-third of the royal income was reserved for the new sovereign. One hundred marks a month was allotted for the deposed king's expences, and he was consigned to the care of the earl of Leicester<sup>93</sup>.

The king had all the indulgences which, in his recluse situation, the attentions of the earl could give. But his reflections must have been severe, for, before the English would have suffered the son of their Edward I. to have been deposed, great must have been that son's misconduct, and hopeless his amendment. He lamented bitterly that neither his wife nor children came near him<sup>94</sup>. His plaintive exclamations interested the earl and his family; but on being communicated to his alienated queen, though they did not excite

<sup>93</sup> Moor, 600, 601.—In one part of this reign, an impostor of low condition attempted to take advantage of the king's unpopularity, by pretending to be a son of Edward I. *Lel. Coll.* vol. 2. pp. 473. 462.

<sup>94</sup> Ad. Murimuth mentions, that she sent him delicate garments and soothing letters, but pretended that the Commons would not let her visit him. p. 70.

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excite her sympathies, they alarmed her by their visible impression on others, and she is charged with combining with the bishop of Hereford to plan his destruction. Two knights, Gorney and Maltravers, were selected as fit instruments to accomplish their base purposes, and were empowered to receive him from the earl of Leicester, and to carry him where they thought most proper, and to treat him as they pleased. They conducted him from Kenilworth to Corffe Castle, then to Bristol, where he was kept till the citizens shewed some disposition to liberate him and send him abroad. This desire being known to his keepers, they conveyed him in the silence of the night to Berkley Castle. Anxious for his death, but dreading to produce it by violent means, which would revolt the public sensibility, they strove to harass him into disease by the most cruel and contumelious treatment: they made him ride thinly clad, and with uncovered head, that the severity of the season might affect him; they prevented him from sleeping, when exhausted nature sank into repose; they gave him unsuitable food, and contradicted all his wishes—that by watchings, by cold, and perpetual mortifications, they might hurry him to a premature grave<sup>94</sup>.

Pursuing this plan of crafty villany, they made him a crown of straw, and ironically saluted him with “Fare forth, sir King.” To avoid meeting any of his friends, they turned towards the marshes on the Severn; and to prevent his being recognized, they resolved that his head and beard should be shaved. They stopped him on a small hillock for this purpose, and brought some dirty water out of a neighbouring ditch. The king, weeping profusely at the coarse indignity, exclaimed, that he would have warm water, though from his own tears<sup>95</sup>.

Secured

<sup>94</sup> Moor, 602.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.—In justice to the king’s understanding, we may suppose, not that he shed tears to produce the warm water which he required, but that the tears occurring from

his vexation at the indignity, he felt that they would answer his purpose. Moor says, that he had his account, after the great pestilence, from William Bishop, who was one of the attendants of the king’s tormentors.



Secured at Berkley, his unworthy queen renewed her consultations with the prelate. Their scheme of contumelies had not answered. But the safety, not only of themselves, but of so many others, was now involved in the king's death, that his life was contemplated with all the impatience of alarmed and conscious guilt. Reproachful letters were sent to his keepers, for behaving to him too delicately. As the bishop knew that they dared not to proceed to the last violence without a written authority, he sent them an ambiguous order, which they interpreted as he wished<sup>96</sup>. They forbade the lord of the castle, who was disposed to treat Edward courteously, to have any more access to him, and the nobleman quitted the place in disgust. They shut their sovereign up in a loathsome chamber, hoping that the foetid exhalations would destroy him; but the king, reaching a window, cried out to some carpenters who were working on one side. The wretches perceiving that nothing but actual murder would avail, rushed upon him one night as he was sleeping in his bed, and holding him down, half suffocated with the bolsters, they thrust a red hot plumber's iron into his bowels, through a horn, that no external mark of violence might be seen on his person. The poor king screamed in his agonies till some in the castle heard him, and suspecting his catastrophe, began to pray for his departing soul; but no one dared to interfere, and he expired in torture unrelieved<sup>97</sup>. The murderers fled, on the perpetration of their horrible enormity. One was taken at Marseilles, and beheaded on his way to England, that he might not impeach his employers; the other escaped to Germany, and lingered out there a clandestine

and

<sup>96</sup> Edwardum occidere nolite timere bonum est. Moor, 602. This may be either construed, "Fear not to kill Edward—it is a good thing;" or, "Do not kill Edward—it is good to fear it."

<sup>97</sup> Moor, 603.—The next day, many abbots, earls, knights, and burgesses of Bristol and Gloucester, were called in, to see that his body was not mutilated. They privately inspected it, but superficially. Ad. Murim. p. 71.

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and miserable existence<sup>98</sup>, till he obtained a pardon and permission to return.

The character of this unhappy king seems to have been a compound of indolence, effeminacy, weak judgment, and self-will. His person was tall and strong, and his countenance handsome. His natural capacity was so enervated by indulgencies, that though a reflective contemporary says, that if he had exercised himself in arms he would have excelled the Cœur de Lion, and if he had not followed the advice of bad men he might have been more noble than all his predecessors<sup>99</sup>; yet his reign was more disgraceful and calamitous to himself than that of any preceding sovereign of the Norman line. Infirm of spirit, and devoted to his enjoyments, he shewed no energy but in striving to be arbitrary, and in supporting his favourites against the united feeling of his nobility and the common sense of the country. Son of one of our most able kings, and father of one of our most celebrated, his reign intervenes like a narrow and rugged isthmus between two great continents, barren itself, but the connecting passage between regions of great produce and renown. It is probable that his life of effeminate imbecility may have been the period of transition of the national manners, to that gay, gallant, and luxurious chivalry, which distinguished the times of his son. Luxury visibly increased in his reign<sup>100</sup>, and the habits of the nation became more splendid afterwards.

<sup>98</sup> Moor, 603.—The Parliamentary Rolls have preserved the proclamations and rewards issued for the apprehension of the two murderers. Plac. Parl. vol. 2. pp. 53 & 54. There is also a record of Berkley's clearing himself. His statement is, that he certainly received the king into his custody; but that when Edward was murdered, he was afflicted with such a severe malady out of the castle, that he had lost all memory. Pl. Parl. p. 57.

<sup>99</sup> Mon. Malm. 136.—This author seems to have penned his thoughts in his Chronicle, as if writing a diary from day to day. In this part he exclaims, "Grant, O Lord! peace in our days, and may the king be harmonious with his barons." Ib.

<sup>100</sup> See the feast on the installation of the abbot of Canterbury, in his reign, Lel. Coll. vol. 6. p. 34. And see also the king's edict to *restrain* luxury, in 1315, which he begins with



afterwards. Two transient observations of reproach, which have been made on him by ancient chroniclers, may lead us to infer, that England is indebted to him for the encouragement of two of the great sources of her prosperity—her agriculture and her navy. One intimation is, that if he had given as much attention to arms as he actually applied to husbandry<sup>101</sup>, his name would have been resounded through the world. The other remark, meant to be a sarcasm, expresses a mistaken inference of his subjects, or rather their ignorance of the important consequences of his taste; “King Edward kept much the se costes, al delighting in shippes, and too much using the vile company of maryners, wherby he lost much favour of his people<sup>102</sup>.” We may construe this censure to imply, that he pursued a wise object in an unwise manner. But he had stamped the character of weakness so indelibly on his name, that his best actions may have been misconceived and misrepresented. On the whole we may conclude, that from a wiser education he would have derived a stronger judgment, and then might have become an applauded and happy king; but, blighted in the spring-time of life, his character became such as chiefly to serve

“To point a moral and adorn a tale!”

with reciting, “Forasmuch as through too outrageous and unmeasurable services of measses and meates the whiche greate personages of our realme *at this tyme* have made and used to make, and yet do make and use in their houses—and hereupon other meaner men, to whom it is not convenient

to take upon them such thynges, do endeavour and enforce themselves to counterfaite the great estates in doying such outrages farther than their state requireth.” *Ib.* p. 36.

<sup>101</sup> “Circa rem rusticam.” *Mon. Malm.* p. 136.

<sup>102</sup> *Scala Chronica*, p. 549.

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#### NOTE ON THE KNIGHTS TEMPLARS.

IN this reign the Knights Templars were abolished. The reader may be gratified to have the principal facts of the accusation and evidence against this celebrated and powerful

body, presented to his view in a concise and authentic summary: I will state them from the legal records preserved in Wilkies' *Concilia*, vol. 2.

It

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It was in 1309 that the letters of the pope Clement "*plumbea bulla bullatæ*," and therefore, perhaps, more technically to be called his Bull, were read to the bishop of London, and others, sitting in his episcopal hall. In this the Pope stated, that having been privately informed that the Master and Knights Templars had lapsed into apostasy, idolatry, profligacy and heresy, he had been unwilling to believe it. That Philip the king of France had made many representations to him on the subject: That a knight of the order, of high nobility, had sworn privately before him, that every new candidate, before he was received into the order, denied Christ, spat contemptuously upon a cross, and did other abominable things: That official inquiries had been made on this subject, and various depositions and confessions received, which shewed that some were delinquents in many things, and others in fewer: That therefore, as he could not himself inquire into the conduct of the order in every part of the world, where it was spread, he authorized them personally to commence, in the diocese of Canterbury, a careful examination of the evil complained of. He reduces these charges into eighty-seven heads, of which the substance may be comprized in the following paragraph:—

That every new knight, on being admitted, or soon afterwards, denied Christ, or God, and the Virgin, and sometimes the Saints; that the brotherhood generally did this, or the greater part; that they called our Saviour a false prophet, and said he did not die to redeem mankind, and that they had no hope of salvation from him; that they spat on the cross, trampled on it and defiled it; that they worshipped a cat, in contempt of Christianity; that some, or all, did not believe in the Eucharist; that they thought their master or commanders could absolve them from all sin; that they kissed their new brother on indecent parts of his body; that their admissions and ceremonies were clandestine, and confined to themselves; that

they committed loathsome vices; that they had idols, some with three heads, some with one, and some with a human skull, which they worshipped, and to which they ascribed the power of giving wealth, making trees germinate and flowers blow; that they swore to increase their order by any means; that they enjoined each other to strict secrecy, and that they punished with death or the dungeon, those who revealed their secrets.

On these accusations the inquisitorial commissioners reported, that they had communicated their commission to the Templars of London, and proceeded to examine them and other witnesses separately and apart from each other; and they detail the evidence which they had obtained.

They first examined one, who had been a Knight Templar five years: He had declared, that he had been admitted at Bath, before a hundred secular persons; that he asked the order to admit him to serve God and the Virgin; that he was then informed of the rules of the order, that he should do nothing of his own will, but according to the will of the commander; that he then swore to obey his superior, to have no property, to preserve chastity, not to consent to any one being unjustly disinherited, nor lay violent hands on any one, except Saracens, or except in self-defence; that this oath was taken before two brothers only, and that he had never made any other profession.

The three next examined, declared their admission to have been secret, and that it was the rule of the order that it should be so. One of them, keeper of the Temple chapel in London, was questioned, article by article, on the charges. He positively denied all the imputations, except the secrecy of their admissions, which he understood to be one of the original institutes of the order. All the others gave similar answers; although some declared that their admissions had not been private.

Fifty Knights Templars, from different counties



counties in England, were sent to the Tower; and other persons were examined, about the secrecy and time of day of the admission, but no criminating facts were obtained.

New questions were then proposed to many Knights Templars; but nothing unfavourable was elicited, except that the admissions were secret, that the chapters were usually held at nights, and that the great master granted absolutions.

Other evidences, however, deposed many things on hearsay, confirmatory of the accusations. A Yorkshire knight swore, that a Templar once, at dinner at his house, declaimed against Christianity, and gave his wife a book to read on the same topics. A country rector said, that a priest had told him that he had taken the confession of a Knight Templar, who proved the charges; and many rumours and stories, at second and third hand, were also repeated.

More direct evidence was obtained, in July 1311, from a Knight Templar who had fled, and was taken at Salisbury. He swore that he was compelled, by the grand master and two knights holding drawn swords, to deny Christ, and to spit upon the cross; that they did not adore a cat in England, but he had heard they did so in other parts. Another knight at first denied the accusations, but on a subsequent examination declared, that he had been forced to deny Christ, and that he had heard one of the grand masters say that the smallest hair on a Saracen's beard was of more value than all the body of Christ.

Another Templar admitted that he had been forced into apostasy. From these and other confessions, which are certainly not free from reasonable suspicion as to their veracity; but still more from the general unpopularity and ill opinion under which the Templars laboured, their order was dissolved by the Pope, and all its property confiscated.

The truth probably was, that the order had become useless, and, from its great affluence, dissolute and sensual. Many, and perhaps most of its members, from that Epicurean state of mind and habit to which wealthy luxury naturally leads, may have thrown off all regard for either religion or virtue; and some, from enlightened reason, may have emancipated themselves from the superstitions of the day. But that they should have worshipped cats or calves; or made the abnegation of Christianity, or spitting on the cross, any part of the ceremony of their admission into the order, is wholly incredible. Personal vice and irreligion may be believed of them; but not that absurd conspiracy against the faith of Christendom, of which they were accused. Their dissolution was however a benefit to the world; because all societies, that place mysterious secrecy and implicit obedience to its leaders among their essential rules, are dangerous to public order, and disadvantageous to public morals, being founded on principles that are inconsistent with both.

Acta contra Templarios, ap. Wilk.

Concil. vol. 2. pp. 329—401.

### CHAP. III.

NOTE  
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# HISTORY

## OF

# E N G L A N D.

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### C H A P. IV.

HISTORY OF THE REIGN OF EDWARD THE THIRD.

1327—1377.

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National  
improvements in  
this reign.

**I**T is a general persuasion among Englishmen, that the reign of Edward III. is the most illustrious period of their ancient annals. The victories of Cressy and Poitiers, may have produced the popular sentiment ; but the reflective mind will adopt the opinion as steadily, when it observes, during this reign, That our navy established its preponderancy over the most celebrated fleets that were then accustomed to navigate the British channel : That our parliament enjoyed, in full and upright exercise, those constitutional powers, which the nation has long learnt to venerate as its best inheritance ; but which weaker sovereigns have, too eagerly, contested : That our manufactures and commerce began to exhibit an affluence, and an expanding growth ; and to be conducted on the true principles of public improvement : That our clergy evinced a disposition to emancipate themselves from the papal despotism ; and some, to exercise a just freedom of thought, on the most important of all human concerns : That the lineaments of our prose literature became distinctly discernible : That the pursuit of the mathematical and



and natural sciences, and of the art of reasoning, at one or both of our venerable Universities, was ardent and successful: That our poetry assumed the attractive form, with which its life, sympathy, utility, and immortality are most surely connected: And that our manners displayed a moral sentiment, which, though somewhat fantastic, and not always pure, yet contributed to soften the horrors of war, and has led to that more cultivated feeling, which, continually increasing and refining, has made Englishmen distinguished for their generosity, magnanimity, and honour. The historical picture appears with these subjects before us, as we contemplate the reign of Edward III. The monarch himself, for a time advancing with his age, and sometimes preceding it, in what was then considered to be the perfect gentleman, was, for many years, and until prosperity, grief, and age, debilitated him, a model for the imitation of his contemporaries, and, except in his love of war, to his successors. He was rewarded for his utilities with a reign long enough to give, to all the improvements which it fostered or occasioned, a sufficient period for their due developement and effective establishment. England appears with new features after his death. She became a country, of larger mind and nobler manners, hastening rapidly to more glorious destinies.

For the deposition and murder of his father, he was in no respect answerable; the plans of others had produced those events, when he was too young to be consulted or to assist. For the same reason, he is not responsible for the deceitful proclamation issued in his name, assuring the nation, that his father had voluntarily abdicated, and wished him to assume the government of the kingdom<sup>1</sup>. Scarcely fourteen, he was not even allowed the limited interference to which that age might have entitled him. A council of regency, composed of twelve distinguished persons, was assembled,

to

<sup>1</sup> See it in Rymer, Act. Fœd. vol. 4. p. 243.

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to conduct the affairs of state<sup>2</sup>; and the queen, and Mortimer, under her influence, struggled to monopolize to themselves the chief power of the administration. It was soon thought politic, after reversing the attainder of the duke of Lancaster<sup>3</sup>, and issuing parliamentary indemnities to the queen's adherents<sup>4</sup>, and promising to the commons the amendment of the grievances, and the preservation of the liberties, on which they petitioned<sup>5</sup>, to employ the young king, and the active part of the country, in some warfare that was neither dangerous nor distant: and Scotland soon furnished a convenient necessity for a summer expedition, in which Froissart has presented us with a living picture of the times.

His campaign against the Scots.

1326.

The invasion of the northern counties by the Scottish army, intrusted by Robert Bruce, now fast declining in health<sup>6</sup>, but unbroken in spirit, to the earl of Moray and Douglas, occasioned Edward to have his first experience of military life. The objects of the Scots were plunder and devastation, and their army was adapted to their purposes. Four thousand knights and esquires, well mounted, and twenty thousand fierce and daring followers, on little gallowses, that rode twenty leagues a day without halting<sup>7</sup>, with no baggage, but an iron plate under the flaps of their saddle, and a little bag of oatmeal behind it, could move with a rapidity that ensured both success and escape. Their drink, was the water of the streams

<sup>2</sup> The Chronicle of Peter College Library mentions them to have been, the two archbishops, two bishops, the king's three uncles, another earl, and four barons. Lel. Collect. vol. 2. p. 476.

<sup>3</sup> The record of this reversal is printed in the Plac. Parl. vol. 2. p. 3. At the next meeting of the parliament, the Commons petitioned for his coronation. Ib. p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Plac. Parl. p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Ib. pp. 7—12.

<sup>6</sup> "Moult vieil et malade de la grosse

maladie." Froiss. c. 16. The French edition of Froissart which I use, is Paris 1574. Its chapters differ from those of Mr. Johnes's translation. To suit the readers who are possessed of this, though I shall quote the chapter from the above French edition, I will, in this part, add the page of Mr. Johnes's translation, which I shall sometimes adopt.

<sup>7</sup> These horses were never tied up or dressed, but were let loose, to pasture in the meadows and heaths. Froiss. c. 18. p. 47.



streams they passed, with which they made their meal into a paste, and, on their little plates, baked it into thin cakes over a hasty fire; their more luxurious food, was the half sodden flesh of the cattle they seized and skinned. Thus prepared for depredation, they suddenly reached and passed the Tyne, before the army appointed to defend it was apprized of their vicinity<sup>8</sup>.

The English administration had summoned a large force to meet the king at York; where a subsidiary body of the Hainaulters joined them, who were endangered by a quarrel with the English archers, during the six weeks festivity of the court in this town<sup>9</sup>. At last Edward marched to Durham, near the beginning of a country called Northumberland, which Froissart characterizes as wild, full of deserts and mountains, and very poor in every thing but cattle. Advancing towards the Tyne, he beheld the smoke of the Scottish fires. The alarm was sounded. Every one hastened to his proper banner: and in the fields, three bodies of infantry were formed, with two wings of five hundred horse to each<sup>10</sup>, who marched in this battle-array, till night, towards the place whence the smoke was seen ascending. The army halted in a wood by the side of a small river, to rest themselves, and to wait for their baggage and provisions. The Scots had disappeared<sup>11</sup>.

At daybreak, the banners in each party were displayed, and they  
marched,

<sup>8</sup> Froiss. c. 18. p. 46.—Barbour, in his 19th book, versifies his account of this invasion, vol. 3. pp. 130—152. Lord Hailes gives a portion of his appendix to it, vol. 2. p. 285.

<sup>9</sup> Froiss. c. 17. 41—45. But for this quarrel, says Froissart, they would have passed their time very pleasantly, for, “Good wines from Gascony, Alsace, and the Rhine, were in abundance, and reasonable. Poultry and other provisions at a low price. And hay, oats and straw, of a good quality, and cheap, were delivered at their quarters.” p. 45.

<sup>10</sup> Froiss. c. 18. 19. p. 48. He states

Edward’s army to have contained 8,000 men at arms, knights and esquires, and 30,000 men armed and provided; of whom, half were mounted on little hackneys, and half on foot. The text adds, that there were 24,000 archers on foot. This is so far beyond the usual proportion of archers, that I would read it 4,000.

<sup>11</sup> On 10th July 1327, the king marched from York to Top Clif; on the 13th, he arrived at Durham, where he remained till the 14th. Hailes, 286.

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marched, in their respective order, over the mountains and through the valleys. The Scots easily kept before them. They were obliged to toil after their less incumbered enemies, through marshes, and over hilly and dangerous ground, till, as night approached, they were all so fatigued as to be unable to proceed. The king and the marshals ordered the army to encamp where they were; and they lay that night in a wood on the banks of a small river, while he retired to a poor abbey just by. A council was then held, to devise the best means of bringing the Scots to battle; and it was agreed to break up at midnight, and endeavour to reach the Tyne before their enemy could pass it, and thus compel them to surrender, or to fight with disadvantage. With this resolution each retired to his quarters, to refresh himself with what he found there; and all were ordered to be silent, that the signal-trumpets might be heard. At the first sound, the horses were to be saddled; at the second, every one was to arm; at the third, they were to mount and join their banners. Rapidity of movement being the only chance of success, each was to carry but one loaf of bread, slung behind him; all unnecessary arms, harness, and baggage, were to be left behind<sup>12</sup>.

These measures allowed little rest, notwithstanding the preceding day's fatigue; but they were punctually executed. At midnight the army was mounted, and was fully arranged as day began to break. The banner-bearers then hastened on: all followed, over heaths, hills, valleys, and rocks, without the comfort of finding a level surface. In some parts, the marshes and bogs were so spacious, that many fell; and, as every one galloped forwards without waiting for commander or companion, few of the unfortunate could get assistance to extricate them. Many of the banners and horses were left where they were entangled. Sometimes cries of alarm made those behind believe that the front ranks were engaged with

<sup>12</sup> Froiss. c. 19. p. 50.



with the enemy. Eager to assist, the rear hurried forward over the stones and heights, each with his shield on his neck and his sword in his hand, to partake the fray, and were as often disappointed to find that the noise had proceeded from the herds of wild animals flying terrified before the unusual visitants, and pursued by the shouts of the advance of the army, enjoying and increasing their dismay<sup>13</sup>.

Having rode all that day over hills and across deserts, without keeping to any fixed road or path, or meeting with any town; at last, about evening, they reached the Tyne. They found no enemy, and hoped the Scots had not yet arrived. They crossed the ford before they rested, but with great difficulty, from the large stones that lay at the bottom. After passing the river, each took up his lodging on its banks as well as he could. The sun was now set. Few had any hatchets or wedges to cut down trees, to make themselves huts or fires. They had travelled that day above sixty miles on a gallop, without stopping, except to arrange the furniture of their horses, as the violent motion loosened it. They were forced to lie all night on the banks of the river, in their armour<sup>14</sup>, and at the same time to hold their horses by their bridles, for there was nothing to which they could tie them. The poor animals had neither forage nor oats to eat, after their hard labour; and the men had only their loaf, now wet with the perspiration of their steeds. No one had either fire or light, but a few lords, who had brought some torches with them. In this melancholy state they passed the night, without disarming themselves or unsaddling their horses. When the desired morning came, from which they expected some comfort, it began to rain; and the showers continued to fall all day, till the river was so swelled at noon, that no one could repass it,

<sup>13</sup> Froiss. c. 19. p. 51.

is called, in the *Scala Chronica*, p. 551.

<sup>14</sup> The place where they crossed the Tyne, Eiden, or Haidon.

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it, nor be sent to inquire where they were, or from what place to get any forage or litter for their horses, or any bread and wine for themselves. The whole army had to fast another day and night. Some leaves and grass were found for their horses. They hewed down some young trees with their swords, and drove them into the ground, to tie their horses to; and cut some brush-wood, to raise scanty huts for themselves<sup>15</sup>.

In the afternoon, a few straggling peasants were seen, who informed them, that they were fourteen leagues from Newcastle, and eleven from Carlisle, and that no accommodation could be had nearer. Messengers were sent off with horses, to procure provisions. After passing three days and nights without any, an indifferent supply at last arrived. When it came, it was so dear and so scanty, that frequent quarrels occurred, from the tearing the food out of each others hands. They lay four days more at this place: it rained the whole time: the wet rotted their saddles and girths. They had no shoes for the horses which wanted them; and no clothing to keep themselves from the rain and cold, but their jerkins and their armour. Their green huts were an insufficient defence against the weather, and they had no wood to burn, but such as was too moist to take fire<sup>16</sup>.

Not believing that the Scots had got over the river before they arrived, they continued expecting their approach. Neither army knew where the other was. The king promised the grants of knighthood, and of land to the amount of a hundred a year, to the first person who should bring correct information where the Scottish forces lay. Sixteen persons ascended the mountains, and scattered themselves on all sides, to reconnoitre; and the English repassed the river, and marched on. On the fourth day of their advance,

<sup>15</sup> Froiss. pp. 52, 53.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. 54.



advance, an esquire was seen galloping hastily towards the king<sup>17</sup>; he had discovered the Scottish army on a hill, where they had been some days resting, about nine miles off. The king ordered the horses immediately to be turned into the fields to feed, masses to be said, and every one afterwards to repose<sup>18</sup>. When they had arisen and breakfasted, the trumpets sounded; each battalion, regularly formed, advanced by itself over the hills and dales, and about noon they came in sight of the host they were pursuing. The Scots, issuing out of their huts, hastened into a military order, and formed into three bodies, on the descent of the eminence where they had lodged<sup>19</sup>. The river on which the Scots were stationed, the Weire, ran with a strong and rapid stream at the foot of the hill, and so close to it, that there was no room for the English to draw up in a line of battle when they had passed. The Scots were so posted as to annoy their enemy with stones, while crossing. The king ordered his men to dismount, take off their spurs, and advance to the river on foot, in slow time, and keeping their ranks. It was meant by this firm countenance, to see whether the Scots would retire, or dispute the passage. They continued immoveable: and both armies now approached so near, that they could discern the arms on each others shields<sup>20</sup>. The English halted. A few were remounted, to skirmish with their opposers, and to examine the river more closely. Heralds were sent, to invite the Scots to pass and fight upon the plain, or to allow the English to come over unmolested, and try their prowess on the other side. Aware of their advantages, the invaders would not forego them; and it was proclaimed through the English army, that each was to take up his quarters where he was, without

<sup>17</sup> Rymer has inserted, in his *Fœdera*, the grant of one hundred a year to Thomas de Rokesby, for his life, for this service. vol. 4. p. 312.—Hailes makes Beltingham the point where the English recrossed. 289.

<sup>18</sup> Blanch Land, on the Derwen, was the place of this halt.

<sup>19</sup> Froiss. pp. 55, 56.

<sup>20</sup> *Ib.* pp. 57—59.

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without quitting his ground or his arms. All lay that night uncomfortably upon the hard ground, among rocks and stones, with their armour on, without fires, and obliged to hold their horses as they slept. But, to deprive them of the comfort of repose, the Scots, about midnight, made such a blowing and noise with their horns, all together, "that it seemed as if all the great devils of hell had come there"<sup>21</sup>.

The English did not venture to cross the river in the front of an enemy so strongly posted, and remained on its bank three days, hoping that want of food might compel the Scots to some movement. On the fourth morning, not one was to be seen; they had decamped at midnight. They were pursued, and found stationed on another mountain, stronger than before, on the same river, and protected by a large wood. The English marched along the river, on the opposite bank, watching an advantageous moment to cross it, and attack<sup>22</sup>. In the dead of the night, lord Douglas, with two hundred men from the Scottish camp, passed over the river considerably beyond the English camp, and, riding suddenly upon it, surprised the sleeping warriors with an attack, shouting vociferously, "Douglas for ever! Die, ye thieves of England." They killed more than their own number, and even pierced to the king's tent, and cut some of its cords. The general alarm forbidding further achievements, Douglas retired with little loss, and rejoined his friends<sup>23</sup>.

The Scots  
retreat.

The English, keeping better guard, and skirmishing perpetually with their enemy, at last took a Scottish knight prisoner, who declared that orders had been issued, for every one to be armed by  
vespers,

<sup>21</sup> Froiss. p. 60.

<sup>22</sup> This was near the place called Stanhope Park. Hailes 291. We derive this name from Scala Chron. 551.

<sup>23</sup> Froiss. 61, 62. Froissart declares Douglas

to have been esteemed the bravest and most enterprising of any in the two countries. c. 18. Barbour makes Bruce, on his death-bed, select him to carry his heart to the Holy Land. l. 26. p. 162.



vespers, and prepared to follow the banner of their Douglas. This looked like an intended repetition of the night attack. The English were formed into three battalions, made large fires, and continued in arms all the night; but the darkness passed without disturbance. At dawn, their scouts overtook two Scottish trumpeters, who told them that they were losing their time, for that Douglas had decamped with the army at midnight, in his way home, and was then several leagues off. The English chiefs agreed that it was in vain to follow them; and the young, but high-spirited king, wept with vexation at the disappointment. They inspected the remains of the Scottish camp, released a few English prisoners, whom they found naked and fastened to trees<sup>24</sup>; then marched back to Durham, and thence to York, amid great murmuring, and with a popular belief that Bruce had bribed Mortimer with thirty thousand pounds, to allow his army to escape. On this charge we may remark, that there was a want of enterprise, at least, in the English leaders, who could be twice for several days directly opposite to the Scottish camp, without venturing to cross the river to attack it, though they had endured such fatigues to overtake it<sup>25</sup>. A peace followed, which the veteran Bruce did not long survive; but he had secured the independence of his country, and deservedly lives still in the affectionate memory of his grateful nation<sup>26</sup>.

At

<sup>24</sup> Froiss. 63. Scal. Chr. 551. They found there more than 500 large cattle, which, being too slow to follow them, the Scots had killed, that they might not fall into the hands of the English alive; also more than 300 cauldrons made of leather, with the hair on, which were hung over the fires full of water, with meat ready to be boiled. Above a thousand spits had meat on them to roast; and more than 10,000 pairs of old worn-out shoes, made of undressed leather, with the hair on, were also left by the Scots. Ib. 64.

<sup>25</sup> Anon. Hist. Ed. III. p. 298.

<sup>26</sup> No sovereign of Scotland has upheld its national glory with more personal exertions than Robert Bruce. His victory at Bannockburn was a fine instance of military talent triumphing over a force apparently irresistible. His successes contributed to postpone the union of Scotland with England, till the two countries could combine on the terms of fraternal equality, and not on those of conqueror and vanquished. Froissart's account of his death, has, like all his dialogue stories, a romantic

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King's  
marriage;

At the age of sixteen, Edward married Philippa, the daughter of the count of Hainault and Holland. He had seen her when his mother returned with him from Paris to Valenciennes, and had distinguished her from her three sisters, by his attentions<sup>27</sup>. The court of Hainault had a chivalric taste: its lord had recently celebrated a tournament at Condé, with the king of Bohemia, and many of the great lords of France<sup>28</sup>; and Philippa proved, during her husband's reign, that she had imbibed no small portion of the heroic spirit of the day.

His chivalric taste.

The magnificent or ostentatious disposition of Mortimer contributed to give Edward a love of chivalry and romantic praise. Mortimer, after he was created earl of March, is described to have become "proud beyond measure." Even his son remarked it so strongly, as to call him "King of Folly<sup>29</sup>." A desire of emulating the feats or the fame of the renowned Arthur, incited him to keep a round table of knights, in imitation of this favourite hero of romance<sup>30</sup>. Edward, then about eighteen, was of the age to be impressed by the gallant ceremonies of this knightly entertainment. A few years afterwards, he imitated them himself, in a great tournament and hastiludia, in London and at Dunstaple, and in feasts and jousts of the same character, at Windsor and elsewhere<sup>31</sup>.

The

a romantic air, c. 21. p. 71—78; and yet Barbour's is similar, 161—166. But the request of Bruce to Douglas, to carry his heart to Palestine, was romantic. Rymer has printed Edward's passport to Douglas for this journey, vol. 4. p. 400.

<sup>27</sup> Froiss. c. 9. p. 22. and c. 20. p. 68. A youth, one of her countrymen, came over with her, to wait on her and to carve for her. He became, as Sir Walter Manny, one of the greatest warriors of the age.

<sup>28</sup> Un tournoy qui la estoit crié. Froiss. c. 15. p. 36.

<sup>29</sup> Chron. Pet. Coll. 2. Lel. Col. 476.

<sup>30</sup> We derive this incident, which casts a ray of light on the origin of Edward's chivalric taste, from the same old chronicle. "Erle Mortimer kept the rounde table of knyghtes in Wales for a pride, in figure of Arture." Ib. p. 476. Avesbury says that he held a round table at Wigmore, and gave gifts like a king. p. 7.

<sup>31</sup> Chron. Pet. Col. p. 478.—In 1331, he held a tournament for fifteen days at Dartford; and on the Monday after St. Matthew, thirteen knights held a hastiludia for three days,



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EDWARD III.Earl of Kent  
destroyed.

The conduct of Mortimer and the queen excited so much public discontent, that an attempt was made to overawe it, by the arrest of the earl of Kent, the king's uncle, and one of the leading opposers of the government. He was accused of treason on a fabricated charge, condemned and executed. In choosing this nobleman for the victim, they had the art to fix on an unpopular person<sup>32</sup>; but the benefit they derived from this gross act of legal murder, was transient. The king was displeased at its perpetration<sup>33</sup>; and his visible dissatisfaction encouraged some to inform him, that Mortimer was implicated in his father's destruction. Being now eighteen, the age at which, according to the English law, the royal minority ceases, he resolved to emancipate himself from his degrading tutelage. The queen and Mortimer were too powerful to be attacked by open force. But on the meeting of the parliament at Nottingham, a scheme to apprehend them was successfully executed. They resided in the castle, for security, guarded by their military friends. The king, by the connivance of the governor, was admitted secretly at night, with a few brave friends, through a subterraneous passage. Mortimer was seized in his bed-room and secured, after killing the first who entered<sup>34</sup>. He was arraigned before his peers in parliament, convicted, and executed<sup>35</sup>. The queen dowager was confined in an appointed castle, with every appendage of dignity and

Mortimer  
seized, and  
executed.

days, against any willing to come. Wal. Hem. p. 272. And Avesbury remarks, that at Michaelmas, in his fifth year, he held a solemn hastiludia in Cheapside, between the conduit and the cross, such as had not been seen before. p. 9. The wars of Edward I. had led to a renewal of these warlike exercises.

<sup>32</sup> Anon. Hist. p. 395. The author says, that he was less regretted by the people, because he had allowed his household to

seize the property of others without paying for it.

<sup>33</sup> Chron. Pet. Col. 477.

<sup>34</sup> Avesb. p. 8. Wal. Hem. 271. Anon. Hist. 396. "Sir Hugh Trumpeton, redy to resiste the taking of Mortimer, was slayne and braynid with a mace by one of Montacute's company." Chron. Pet. Col. 477.

<sup>35</sup> The accusations against him may be seen in the Record. Parl. Plac. vol. 2. p. 52; and in Knyghton Chron. p. 2556.

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invasions of  
Scotland.

1332.

and comfort. The king paid her the filial attention of a visit, twice or thrice a year; but she was not suffered to come abroad<sup>36</sup>.

The first years of Edward's reign continued to be occupied by wars in Scotland. That country, like Wales and Ireland, was too near England, and the national feeling of both countries was then too hostile to each other, for either to be at peace. Causes of dissension are always arising between jealous and irritable tempers; and, ambition is never at a loss for pretexts, if opportunity invite. The restoration of the Scottish estates to some English noblemen, pursuant to the last treaty, not having been fulfilled, was the alleged cause of a renewed warfare<sup>37</sup>. The son of Baliol, the competitor of Bruce, was encouraged to claim the crown, on the promise of Edward's support. A romantic victory, obtained by less than 3,000 men, over the Scottish regent, at the head of 40,000, raised Baliol to the throne<sup>38</sup>. His confidence led to a surprise, which divested him of his crown as easily as he had attained it<sup>39</sup>. The Scots were encouraged by his expulsion, to renew their depredations in the northern counties of England; and this attempt brought Edward into the field against them with all his force. The first plan of his campaign was to retake Berwick. The regent who governed Scotland for king David Bruce, had the impolicy to engage in a pitched battle for its relief. Here Edward fought his first

<sup>36</sup> Froiss. c. 24. p. 84.

<sup>37</sup> The public correspondence on this subject may be seen in Rymer, vol. 4; and on this war with Scotland, Hailes' Annals, 137—170. should be read.

<sup>38</sup> Hemingford's account is, that 40,000 Scots collected at Glasmore under the earl of Mar; that the English passed the water at night, ascended the mountain where the Scots were encamped, and suddenly attacked them at dawn. Seized with a panic, they

crowded on, and destroyed each other, so that the English only had to slaughter. Of the Scots, five earls, two of the Bruces, nearly 3,000 knights and men at arms, and 13,300 infantry, perished. The annalist says, that more were suffocated and trodden down by themselves, than were slain by the enemies' sword. Very few of the English fell. p. 273.

<sup>39</sup> Knyghton, 2562. Wals. 114. Hailes' Ann. 158.



first general engagement at Halidon Hill. He is described as having exerted himself greatly on foot, preceding his army, and animating every one by his cheerful countenance and valour<sup>40</sup>. The Scots received a defeat so decisive and destructive, that Baliol was re-established on this perilous throne<sup>41</sup>. In gratitude to Edward for his help, the restored king did homage for the kingdom of Scotland, and ceded to him several of its southern counties<sup>42</sup>. But it was impossible that a king forced on them by their national enemies, could be popular. New efforts to expel him, produced new invasions from England; which afflicted the country, without subduing its spirit.

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1333.

His Scottish successes, and the applause he derived from his own exertions in obtaining them, confirmed in Edward's mind that passion for military fame, which soon exerted itself in the kingdom of France; obtaining great personal renown to himself and his people, but neither realizing his ambitious expectations, nor acquiring much permanent advantage. To become the king of France, was one of the earliest projects of his youthful ambition; and it arose naturally enough from the circumstances of the times, and from his maternal parentage.

He claims  
the crown  
of France.

<sup>40</sup> Anon. Hist. 402. Heming. 274—277. The contemporary poet, Laurence Minot, thus mentions this battle:

A litell fro that forsaid toun,  
Halydon hill, that es the name,  
There was crakked many a croune  
Of *wild* Scottes, and alls of *tame*.  
Thare was thaire baner born all doune,  
To make silke boste thai war to blame.  
But nevertheless ay er thai boune  
To wait Ingland with sorow and schame.  
Minot, p. 4. Ritson ed.

<sup>41</sup> Nothing is more illusive than the various statements of the numbers of contending armies, and of their losses. Hailes is desirous to adopt the enumeration of the continuation of Hemingford, being 14,655; the Anon. Hist.

Edw. III. extends the number to 60,000, p. 402, whom Walsingham seems to follow, p. 114; the Chron. 2 Lel. 478, makes the slain 25,712. Barnes quotes a MS. at Cambridge, which reckons 56,640 men, Edw. III. p. 78. The numbers in Knyghton are not consistent; he makes 40,000 to have fallen, in p. 2563, but in his detail, p. 2564, he differs from himself, and his numerals are obviously corrupted. The military reputation of a general may sometimes rest on any one defeat or victory; but that of a country, never. It is therefore a subject not worth disputing.

<sup>42</sup> Froissart's chapter on the taking of Berwick, c. 27. pp. 95—106, is an instance that he sometimes writes loosely and inaccurately.

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parentage. The death of Charles the Fair, in 1328, had left that crown without direct male descendants to inherit it. Its three last kings were the sons of Philip the Fair. As they had all reigned successively, and died without issue, the question arose, whether Edward III. the son of Philip's daughter, Isabella, should succeed, or Philip de Valois, the son of <sup>his</sup> her brother, and grandson of the preceding sovereign, entitled Philip the Hardy<sup>43</sup>. According to the English law, the son of the daughter precedes the nephew in inheritance; but the French salic law excluded females. It was contended by Edward, that the feudal laws of France forbade females to inherit, who could not perform the feudal duties; yet, that their male heirs were not debarred by the spirit of this law, because they were competent to discharge all the military services required. On the other hand, it was insisted by the French advocates for Philip de Valois, that the exclusion of the female in the first instance, was an exclusion of all her descendants, of either sex. If it had been a question of succession to the English crown, it would have been rightfully determined by the parliament and law of England; but, as it concerned the crown and law of France, it was clearly a matter for the French state and lawyers to decide. They adjudged in favour of Philip de Valois, and he was crowned king of France<sup>44</sup>. In this decision they acted on the soundest rules of national policy, which can never leave

<sup>43</sup> The preceding French kings were,  
Philip III. the Hardy; acceded 1270.  
Philip IV. the Fair, his son; 1285.  
Lewis X. or Hutin; 1314. } Sons of  
Philip V. the Long; 1316. } Philip IV.  
Chas IV. the Fair; 1322. }  
——— died 1328.

Isabella, the mother of Edward, was daughter of Philip IV.; and Philip Valois was grandson of Philip III. by Charles de Valois, the brother of Philip IV. Lewis X. had left a daughter Jane, who was then alive.

<sup>44</sup> Jean de Monstreuil, who lived about 1400, has left a candid statement of the arguments between Philip and Edward. He says, that Philip had the decision in his favour, "des pers, des barons, des prelates, et autres sages du royaume de France, et de tous les habitants du dit royaume." The Abbé Sallier has given extracts from his curious work, and also from another on the same subject, composed 1461, both in the public library at Paris, in the Mem. Acad. Inscr. vol. 34. pp. 250—279.



leave it doubtful whether a native prince, or a foreign king, would be the preferable sovereign; and Edward ought to have acquiesced in their determination. But it was flattering to Isabella, the mother of Edward, to consider her son as entitled to a crown so illustrious on her brother's death, and it was an object brilliant enough to captivate the fancy of a young prince, who was only sixteen when the vacancy occurred, and who, in addition to his mother's conversation, had the unanimous opinion of his countrymen, reasoning from their own laws, in his favour. The idea thus impressed, mingled with his feelings, and became the idol thought of his maturer age. He pursued, with new ardour, the joust, the tournament, and the round table, that by these favourite exercises he might make himself and his people both able and desirous to excel in war; and as soon as he had completely ended his Scottish contest, and obtained from it reputation and military practice enough to make his future undertaking effective and popular, he prepared, notwithstanding his homage to Philip, to begin his arduous enterprise<sup>45</sup>.

It was in the eleventh year of his reign, and at the age of twenty-six, that he publicly avowed his project, and provided for its execution with all the sagacity of a statesman. He purposed to make his attack on the side of Flanders, and he applied his first care to make those alliances which would most facilitate his invasion. He concluded a treaty with Lewis of Bavaria, then the emperor of Germany, and obtained from him the title of his Vicarius over that part of the empire west of Cologne, which gave him

He makes  
alliances on  
the continent.

<sup>45</sup> The Abbé Sallier remarks, that in 1330 Edward had done liege homage to Philip. And Jean de Monstreuil, from this incident, makes these inferences: "Il monstra bien et declara qu'il n'avoit nul droit, ne cuidoit avoir, a la couronne de France; il attendit a se dire roy de France par maintes années,

et toutesfois n'est pas le royaume de France si petite seigneurie, que l'on doive ainsi ignorer son droit et son action par si long temps, se l'on tient y avoir droit." p. 271. So the old French lawyers thought on Edward's claim.

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him the right of commanding the feudal princes Under this sanction, he made engagements with the duke of Brabant and Gelders; with the archbishop of Cologne; the marquis of Juliers; the count of Hainault and Namur, and grand constable of Zealand and Holland<sup>46</sup>. All these powers bound themselves, for stipulated subsidies, to assist him with their forces, in his enterprise. Secure of their co-operation, he sailed to Antwerp; and from that city explained his claims to the Pope, in a long and respectful letter, drawn up with much civilian ability, hoping to obtain his then important sanction. But the Pope, in answer, reminded him, that he had allied with an emperor who had invaded Italy, and favoured heretics<sup>47</sup>. Sanguine in his hopes of conquest, Edward assumed the title of King of France, quartered his arms with the Gallic lilies, and published manifestoes, asserting his rights, which he had fixed on the doors of several of the French churches. Philip assembled his feudatories and allies, and prepared to watch the movements of his competitor.

The brewer  
of Ghent.

It was important to Edward's success, that the Flemings should befriend him; but their earl was attached to the French king. The state of Flanders, however, favoured his attempt. An ambitious brewer of Ghent, Jacob Von Artaveld, had excited a revolting spirit among the Flemings, had banished the knights and esquires who had supported their legal sovereign, and established in every city such a strong democratic party, obedient to his will, that he governed the country more absolutely than any preceding lord. He affected a sort of princely pomp; was attended in public by sixty or eighty soldiers; collected the earl's revenues for his own use; raised subsidies when he wanted them; paid

<sup>46</sup> Rymer has collected the official documents of these negotiations, in the fourth volume of his *Fœdera*.

<sup>47</sup> See these letters in Hemingford, pp. 282

to 303; and in Walsingham, 119 to 128. The count d'Artois, whom Philip banished, is described by Froissart as urging Edward to this invasion. c. 29. p. 110.



paid liberally his troops and adherents; and killed, without remorse, all those whom he disliked or suspected<sup>48</sup>. Edward, advised to gain the friendship of this dominating brewer, sent his ablest courtiers to flatter and bribe him. Their effort succeeded. Artaveld persuaded or intimidated the chief lords of the Flemish towns to give free passage to the English army; and Edward, sending sir Walter Manny to attack the island of Cadsand<sup>49</sup>, proceeded, at the end of September, to enter France from Valenciennes, into the district of Cambray, burning and plundering all around<sup>50</sup>.

He was joined by the margrave of Brandenburg, son of the emperor; heard and dismissed some cardinals, who came to treat for peace; proclaimed peace and safety to all who should join him; and, to intimidate others, ravaged the country for ten miles round with fire<sup>51</sup>—an act expressive both of the barbarism and folly of the age; for, hearing that Philip was at Noyon, and having crossed the Oise, and advanced to St. Quentin, on his way to his rival, he was informed, in the middle of October, by his allies, that their provisions were exhausted, that the winter was opening with severity, and that it was expedient to retreat. From the belief that the French would have early given battle, they had provided but a short supply<sup>52</sup>. This ill-boding intimation was balanced by letters from the king of France, that he purposed to fight him on the ensuing Thursday. Edward withdrew a little towards Flanders. Messengers from the king of Bohemia

Edward in-  
vades France.  
1339.

<sup>48</sup> Froiss. c. 30. pp. 116—118. Froissart calls him “Brasseur de Miel.”

<sup>49</sup> Froiss. c. 31. & 32. Anon. Hist. Ed. III. p. 413.

<sup>50</sup> The king's own account, in his letter to his son, is, “We passed out of Valenciennes, and the same day began to burn in Cambresyn, and burnt there all the following week; so that this country is very completely destroyed, as well in its corn as in cattle and other property.” Avesbury, 47. This author

was keeper of the registers at Canterbury, and died about 1357: he has inserted several of the public dispatches, and some original account of these French campaigns, in his work.

<sup>51</sup> Heming. 306.

<sup>52</sup> The king in his letter assigns this reason. Hemingford says, he proposed to them to share his provisions, to induce them to stay. p. 306.

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Bohemia announced the impending conflict; and three spies, taken and examined separately, declared that Philip had fixed on Saturday for the struggle<sup>53</sup>. The French army was seen approaching at the time expected. Their advanced guard took an appropriate station; and Edward drew up his forces in a suitable plain into an array, which the Germans and Brabanters came to behold, and contemplated with admiration. The duke of Brabant was so animated with the sight, as to promise a thousand florins to the man who should bring him a hand-breadth of the king of France's banner<sup>54</sup>, and every heart beat high with courage and hope<sup>55</sup>. But still no opposing battalia approached. As yet the cloudy distance glittered with no moving helms or spears; no trampling of steeds, no clashing of arms, no vague sounds like those of an advancing host were heard<sup>56</sup>. Explorers went out, and found

<sup>53</sup> King's letter. Avesb.

<sup>54</sup> Heming. 310—312. "When every thing had been thus arranged, the king, mounted on an ambling palfrey, and attended only by three knights, rode along the line of his army, and right sweetly entreated the lords and their companions, that they would aid him to preserve his honour; which they all promised: he then returned to his own division, and ordered that no one should advance before the banners of the marshals." Froissart, c. 42. p. 158.

<sup>55</sup> "It was a fine sight," exclaims Froissart, "to see the banners and pennons flying in the plain, the barbed horses, and the knights and esquires richly armed." p. 159.

<sup>56</sup> One alarm occurred: "About noon, a hare was started in the plain, and ran among the French army, who began to make a great shouting, which caused those in the rear to imagine that the combat was begun in the front, and many put on their helmets, and made ready their swords." Froiss. 160. We may here call the reader's attention to Laurence Minot's description of this day, as presenting some analogy between Edward III.

and the Ajax of Homer. When a foggy darkness spread over the Grecian host, Homer represents his hero as praying,

If Greece must perish, we thy will obey,  
But let us perish in the face of day.

Minot, who knew nothing of Homer, but was acquainted with his own sovereign, having mentioned that the falling of a mist had changed all the cheers of the English, represents Edward, from his own natural heroism, as praying, like Ajax, to God, to make it clear. It is probable that both Homer and Minot have given us real incidents:

In that morning fell a myst,  
And when oure Inglissmen it wyst,  
It changed all thaire chere:  
Our king unto God made his boone,  
And God sent him gude comfort soone,  
The weder wex ful clere.

Oure king and his men held the felde  
Stal-worthy with spere and schelde,  
And thought to win his right;  
With lordes and with knyhtes kene  
And other doghty men by dene,  
That war ful frek to fight.

Minot, p. 15.



found Philip's advanced guard withdrawn, and his soldiers digging ditches, and felling and fixing thick trees round their position, to preclude attack<sup>57</sup>. Enraged, yet still unwilling to abandon the hope of battle, Edward remained in his array till the shades of evening fell, when the exhausted allies determined to retire. Two days afterwards, the unwelcome tidings came, that Philip had broken up his tents<sup>58</sup>, and retreated in great haste to the interior; leaving the king of England astonished, that a people of old so famous for valour, should have made a solemn engagement for battle, and yet not have kept it<sup>59</sup>. But it was obvious that Philip, aware of the necessities of his antagonists, had been detaining them with a vain hope, in order that their difficulties might increase. Sensible of the superior means or prowess of the invading army, or preferring certainty to chance, he had adopted the Fabian system of defence, instead of the chivalric glory of an ardent conflict<sup>60</sup>. The confederated forces, baffled by his policy, fell back to Brussels; and the campaign ended without Edward's having obtained any advantages commensurate with his preparations. He had moved a larger force against France than he would be probably able to combine again; and yet, with all the effect of a young enthusiasm in his favour, he had achieved no more than a temporary devastation of its northern province. From this experiment he might have seen the  
futility

<sup>57</sup> Heming. King's letter, ap. Avesb.—Minot wrote this stanza upon it:

When Sir Phelip of France herd tell  
That king Edward in feld wald dwell,  
Than gayned him no gle;  
He traisted of no better bote;  
But both on hors and on fote,  
He hasted him to fle.

Minot, p. 15.

<sup>58</sup> King's letter, *Ib.*—His commissioners, in their address to parliament, stated, that he

had got in France as far as "Saint Quyntyn." *Plac. Parl.* 2. p. 103.

<sup>59</sup> Heming. 312.

<sup>60</sup> Froissart says, that Philip's council "told him he had acted right well, and had valiantly pursued his enemies, insonmuch that he had driven them out of his kingdom; and that the king of England must make many such expeditions, before he could conquer the kingdom of France." c. 41. p. 161.

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EDWARD III.

His second  
campaign;  
1340.

futility of his aggrandizing schemes. But the disappointment, instead of suggesting wisdom, only added resentment to ambition. He asked of his parliament three hundred thousand pounds, to meet his expenditure<sup>61</sup>; and, notwithstanding their hesitation, he resolved to obliterate the mortification of his failure by renewed effort and obstinate perseverance.

The next year was distinguished by his achieving a brilliant exploit, which may be classed high in the catalogue of heroic feats. He was about to sail with forty ships to Flanders, and had shipped part of his horses, when his chancellor informed him that Philip, aware of his intended passage, had stationed a large fleet to intercept him. Edward discredited the intelligence; and the minister, alarmed at the consequences likely to result from his incredulity, resigned his seals. This manly firmness induced the king to direct his admiral to explore the truth, who found the French fleet awaiting to surprise him<sup>62</sup>. Philip had secretly assembled at Sluys one hundred and twenty large vessels, and above an hundred others, manned with forty thousand Genoese and French. The king, reflecting on the mischief which this fleet might inflict on his dominions<sup>63</sup>, instead of being deterred by its magnitude, with that instinctive heroism which pervaded his mind, resolved to convert the plan for his destruction into an occasion of his triumph. He told his captains, who hinted danger, that they were in a confederacy to stop his passage. "But I will go, and you, who are afraid where no fear is, may remain at home." All exclaimed, that they would go before him, or they would perish. He returned the seals to the prelate; sent mes-

sages

<sup>61</sup> Plac. Parl. 2. p. 103.

<sup>62</sup> Avesbury, p. 55.

<sup>63</sup> In his letters to his parliament, he says, "The perils which might happen, if they went to injure our kingdom, being considered,

and the comfort it would afford to our enemies, and especially to Scotland, if they should have that power, we resolved to seek them." Pl. Parl. vol. 2. p. 118.



sages to all his ports, for every ship that was ready, to meet him at an appointed station ; and, by riding himself from place to place, to accelerate their preparations, he collected in a few days a force with which he resolved to attempt the enterprise <sup>64</sup>.

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On Midsummer eve, he approached their station in the Swyn ; and the next day, as the sun was rising, he beheld their fleet with the sails down, arranged into four lines, and fastened together with ropes and great iron chains, that they might not be penetrated. They had wooden castles erected at the top of their masts, and small skiffs, full of stones, suspended half way down <sup>65</sup>. Edward drew up all his ships, placing the strongest in the front, and on the wings his archers. Between every two vessels with archers, there was one of men at arms. Detached ships, with archers, were placed in reserve, to assist such as might be damaged <sup>66</sup>. The king sent the bishop of Lincoln towards the shore, to reinforce himself with the Flemish troops ; but they declined to embark, and appeared to wait the issue of the battle, to join the conquering party. Edward then resolved to attack with his English force ; and, hoisting his sails, stretched out a little, to gain the wind and put the sun on their backs <sup>67</sup>.

His great  
naval victory.

A gallant veteran began, by attacking one of the ships of their front line ; the earl of Huntingdon selected another ; the earl of Northampton a third ; sir Walter Manny a fourth ; and others in succession engaged with individual antagonists. The trumpets sounded, and the battle fiercely began. The archers and cross-bowmen shot with all their might ; the men at arms engaged hand to hand. The English threw out their grappling-irons, to link

<sup>64</sup> Avesbury, 55. Hem. 320.

<sup>65</sup> Hem. 320.

<sup>66</sup> Froiss. c. 51. p. 208. "There were in this fleet a great many ladies from England, who were going to attend on the queen at

Ghent. The king had these carefully guarded by three hundred men at arms and five hundred archers." Ib.

<sup>67</sup> Froiss. 209.

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link themselves to their enemies; and their determined bravery, after a long resistance, mastered the first line. The French king's flag was torn down, and the English standard was mounted in its stead <sup>68</sup>.

The two next lines, dismayed by the capture of the first, which had been made a floating fortification, and had been thought invincible, attempted to escape. The English surrounded them before they could separate. The crews threw down their arms, and jumped into their boats: most of these, overladen, sank in the waves, and two thousand men perished. Three lines thus subdued, the English assaulted the fourth, consisting of sixty ships: and here the severest part of the conflict occurred. Some of the bravest defenders of the other lines rallied in these. Night came on in the midst of the struggle, and the impossibility of relief but from their success, produced a desperate courage. Two English ships, with their defenders, were overwhelmed by discharged stones; the rest were in proportionate peril. The king and his nobility were examples to all, of undaunted and indefatigable valour. The conflict continued in the horrors of darkness, beyond the time of midnight, thousands perishing every hour before the victory was decided. The French had outnumbered their assailants four to one, with the additional advantage, of being more experienced mariners. But the English resolution triumphed. The whole of the hostile fleet was captured, and thirty thousand of its fighting men perished in the action <sup>69</sup>—a dreadful consumption of human life, that one individual king, already lord of a noble country, might have also the sovereignty of another! But the improvement of human nature is destined to be progressive, and

<sup>68</sup> Hem. 320. Froiss. 209.

<sup>69</sup> Hem. 320—322. Froiss. 210. Avesbury, 55—57. In one ship, four hundred bodies were found dead. Ib. The king's

public letter states, that all the French fleet was captured, with a moderate loss on his own side. Avesb. 58.



and much imperfection will cling to it till the progress is completed. Edward, however, felt that the award of victory to him was a claim on his personal gratitude. On reaching the shore he knelt down, and humbly breathed his thanks to heaven for his success, and sent letters to England directing a national thanksgiving. His fleet spent the night with all the merriment and noise that trumpets and vociferous exhilarations could exhibit<sup>70</sup>. This decisive achievement gave a superiority of spirit and strength to the English navy, which was displayed on other occasions during this reign, and which has since become the inseparable character of the British islanders.

CHAP.  
III.  
REIGN OF  
EDWARD III.

Edward profited by his success to make another attack on France. Again his force seemed calculated to annihilate opposition. His allies from Hainault, Brabant, and Flanders, swelled his army to nearly 100,000 men<sup>71</sup>. But the whole campaign consisted of the siege of Tournay, which detained his main body eleven weeks; while several minor excursions were prosecuted in the vicinity<sup>72</sup>. The king of France assembled a large army, and encamped near him, in a position which was so strong, from the surrounding marshes, that it could not be attacked. Edward amused himself with sending Philip a challenge to a personal combat, who in answer rebuked him for not considering what he owed to his liege lord. The failure of supplies at last compelled Edward to accept of a proposal for a truce<sup>73</sup>. He retired from the untaken town, and strove to avenge his disappointment on his own ministers, by  
arresting

He attacks  
Tournay;  
1340.

<sup>70</sup> Hem. 321. Froiss. 211.

<sup>71</sup> The Brewer, whom Froissart sends with 60,000 men against the duke of Normandy, c. 51. is described as haranguing the people in favour of Edward's right. "His hearers declared, that he had spoken nobly, and with much experience. He was greatly praised by all; and they declared that he was worthy to

govern, and to exercise the dignity of earl of Flanders." c. 51.

<sup>72</sup> Froissart narrates all these enterprises in his characteristic style, c. 54—64, p. 215—226.—The campaign is more soberly and concisely intimated by Avesbury, 55—65; and by Hemingford, 323, 324.

<sup>73</sup> Avesbury inserts it verbatim, 65—70.

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His third  
campaign.  
1341—1343.

arresting and accusing them of treason, in not forwarding due means for his subsistence<sup>74</sup>. The French were certainly justified for their triumph in their defensive policy. They had prevented the city of Tournay from being lost, and had compelled the great army, that lay before it, to separate without success. In a court of chivalry, the English boast, that they had been suffered to besiege one of Philip's best towns, and to ravage his country, without his punishing them for it as he ought to have done, would be allowed its due weight; but perhaps reason would decide, that Edward had the honour, and Philip the profit, of the campaign<sup>75</sup>.

A dispute as to the succession to the dukedom of Bretagne, in which one of the candidates claimed Edward's assistance, was a temptation to his ambition to interfere, which neither he nor his parliament could resist. Montfort, whose cause he espoused, obtained a temporary possession of the country, and did homage to him for it; but he was at last taken prisoner, and destroyed by Charles de Blois, his rival, and the French parties<sup>76</sup>. His widow displayed, after his death, all the personal heroism of this romantic period<sup>77</sup>; and sir Walter Manny conducted to her relief a powerful English force. It is unnecessary to detail his brave exploits; they are blazoned by Froissart with all the enthusiasm of his pen<sup>78</sup>.

Naval victories again graced the English skill and courage, and gave to the country a substantial benefit, far superior to their glory<sup>79</sup>; but the continental operations ended unfruitfully in a necessary truce<sup>80</sup>.

The

<sup>74</sup> Avesbury has preserved the archbishop's justificatory letter, 71, 72; and the king's invective against him, 77—89, in which he asserts, that he was compelled to make the truce for want of money, and not, as Froissart intimates, from the intercession of lady Joan.

<sup>75</sup> Froissart has preserved to us the rival discussions on this subject, c. 64. p. 249.

<sup>76</sup> Froissart, c. 66—73. pp. 254—278.

<sup>77</sup> Froissart's account of her conduct is highly interesting, c. 81, 82. pp. 300—309.

<sup>78</sup> Froissart, vol. 1. c. 82—86.

<sup>79</sup> Avesbury has inserted in his History Edward's letter to his son, which gives an outline of this campaign, 98—102.

<sup>80</sup> A truce was also made with Scotland, which had renewed its incursions.



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EDWARD III.

1344.

The war was soon renewed, and Edward adopted a larger plan of operations. He sent the earl of Derby, another of the distinguished warriors of the day, to Guienne, to make an active diversion in that quarter; and having lost his great supporter in Flanders, by the destruction of Artaveld in an insurrection of the populace of Ghent<sup>81</sup>, he was persuaded to select Normandy as the point for his own attack, a province abounding in wealth, and but feebly defended. It was this enterprise which Edward probably meant more as a vindictive and predatory excursion, than a serious conflict for the crown of France, which led to the celebrated battle of Cressy<sup>82</sup>.

Edward landed at La Hogue<sup>83</sup>, lay the first night on the sands, and having made the prince of Wales a knight, he advanced in three divisions, leading himself, with the prince, the centre. They found the country abounding with provisions, and proceeded by short marches to Caen<sup>84</sup>. Having loaded a fleet with the plunder thus far obtained, they marched to Evreux; but its fortifications preventing

He again  
invades  
France;  
1346.

<sup>81</sup> Froissart describes this tumult, c. 116. Johnes's Transl. vol. 2. p. 95. It seems to have arisen from the Brewer's efforts to get one of Edward's sons appointed earl of Flanders.

<sup>82</sup> The force which Edward led on this expedition is not accurately stated. Froissart, c. 121. p. 122. mentions 4,000 men at arms and 10,000 archers; besides Welsh and Irish, who are usually reckoned at 12,000 Welsh and 6,000 Irish. This seems too small a force to fill 1100 large ships, mentioned by Knyghton, p. 2585, besides 500 smaller ones, which we may suppose carried the supplies. It is probable that Froissart has understated the proportion of English. Indeed his words imply a loose statement: "*Si pouvoient bien estre en nombre de quatre mille hommes d'armes et dix mille archers.*"

<sup>83</sup> The king fell, as he sprang out of the ship, and the blood gushed from his nose. His knights supported him, and recommended him to return to the ship, as this was but a "*petit signe*" for him. His immediate answer was, "*Return! this is a very good omen: it proves that the land desires me.*" c. 122.

<sup>84</sup> Avesbury inserts an official letter of Magister Northbury, one of the king's counsellors and companions, giving a narrative of this expedition. He says, they landed at La Hogue the 12th July, that they found Barfleur to be as large as Sandwich, and Carenton as Leicester; St. Loo he thought larger than Lincoln. He makes Caen to have exceeded in size every city in England, except London. Avesb. p. 123.

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preventing an immediate capture, they ravaged along the Seine from Pont l'Arche, to Gisors, Mantes, and Meulan, and reached Poissy. Here the king repaired the bridge, and, spreading out his troops, burnt St. Germain, St. Cloud, and Bourg le Reine, and threatened Paris itself, which became doubtful of its safety, as it was then unfortified<sup>85</sup>. But these were mere demonstrations, to alarm. The king, after skirmishing advantageously with several French parties, found that Philip was at Paris, collecting his allies, and with a force continually increasing, and that he was breaking down all the bridges near, not only to check his progress, but to intercept his retreat<sup>86</sup>. Deceiving Philip by an attempt to advance, he declined from Paris suddenly to Beauvais, and, abandoning all attempt to conquer France, he directed his movements to get safely out of it. With this view he fell back to Poix near Amiens, burning and plundering on his way<sup>87</sup>.

He retreats.

The king of France, vexed that Edward had escaped and deluded him, followed leisurely to the Somme. He had expected that the English would have been unable to force the passage, and in that case he intended to confine them in a corner of the coast, and either starve them into surrender, or force them to a disadvantageous battle. Pursuing this plan, he placed strong guards on all the bridges, and at the fords of the river, and broke down those which were less defensible. Edward now became embarrassed and apprehensive. His daring enterprise was drawing to a calamitous termination. The Somme was wide, strong and deep; and his safety depended on crossing it. He sent two marshals, with

<sup>85</sup> Froiss. c. 125. vol. 2. p. 143.—At Poissy, Edward celebrated the feast of the Assumption. “He sat at table in his scarlet robes, without sleeves, trimmed with furs and ermines.” Ib. p. 144.

<sup>86</sup> Knyghton, p. 2587.—When the Parisians, in their alarm, requested Philip not to quit

‘la noble cité de Paris,’ the king, sure of the effect of his defensive measures, calmly answered, “My good people, be not afraid; the English will not approach you nearer than they are.” c. 125.

<sup>87</sup> Mag. Northbury, 136.—Froissart, c. 126. and 127. pp. 148—154.



with a strong detachment, to march along the river, and to find a passage. They tried three several bridges, but were repulsed at all by their defenders, and returned in the evening to the king with the disheartening information of their failure. This became more alarming, because Philip the same night arrived at Amiens with 100,000 men. Edward became very pensive<sup>88</sup>. He heard mass before sun-rise, and ordered the trumpets to sound for decamping. At ten, the English left Airaines with such precipitation, that the French, who arrived there two hours after them, found the meat of the retreating army on the spits, the bread and pastry in the ovens, and some tables ready spread. Edward reached Oisemont, and again examined the Somme: his efforts were this day also unsuccessful; his enemy was close upon him, and the impassable river seemed to consign him to destruction, when the shades of night gave a small interval of safety and repose<sup>89</sup>.

In danger of  
being cut off.

He had taken some prisoners that afternoon: he told them with anxious courtesy the reward he would give, if any of them would shew him a ford below Abbeville, where his army might pass without peril. One of them declared he knew a spot, where, at the ebb of the tide, twelve men might cross abreast; but it must be done before day-break. This news was like the voice of a guardian angel to Edward. His army was ordered to be ready, and at midnight every one was in march to the point of preservation. They reached the ford at sun-rise, but they found themselves too late; the river was so full that they could not cross; it was necessary to wait till the next ebb. Philip, informed by his scouts, of the movement of the English, dispatched a competent force, to guard the ford; and Edward found that he must pass it in the face of 12,000 men, who were assembled to prevent him. Perhaps no army was in a greater military crisis. The king of France was hastening to

<sup>88</sup> "Le roy d'Angleterre fut moult pensif." Froiss. c. 126.

<sup>89</sup> Froiss.

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He escapes  
by passing  
the river.

to the river with all his powers, and Edward had to force his passage against such a formidable opposition, before the main French army arrived<sup>90</sup>. It was a moment of animated despair. But it is on these occasions that the English resolution shines most pre-eminent.

At the instant that the tide had sufficiently receded, the king ordered his marshals to plunge into the water in the name of God and St. George. The bravest, and the best mounted, went in first; they were eagerly followed; and a fierce engagement began. Many on both sides were unhorsed in the water; and when the English gained the land, they had to force their way through a narrow pass. Their valour and constancy at last surmounted the opposition, and so critically, that, as they reached the farther bank, the light cavalry of the advance of the French army came up to the river, and destroyed some of the rear troops, who were late in crossing. Edward breathed his thanks to heaven for his preservation, and marched on, sending a force to secure Crotoy, on the sea shore. This unexpected passage compelled Philip to pause. The returning tide made it impossible for him to pass the ford in pursuit; he had no choice but to go round by Abbeville<sup>91</sup>; while Edward proceeded to the forest of Cressy, and there encamped. "Here let us place ourselves," he exclaimed; "we will not go further, till we have seen our enemies: There is reason to wait for them here, for I am on the lawful inheritance of my mother; and I will defend it against my adversary, Philip de Valois<sup>92</sup>." From the closeness of the pursuit, it was evident that the king could not embark without a battle; and he had now done every thing to fight it with most advantage. He had secured a point of embarkation in case of disaster, by which, at least, some part of his army might escape;

<sup>90</sup> Froiss.

<sup>91</sup> Froiss. Mag. North.

<sup>92</sup> Froiss. c. 127.



escape ; and he had taken his post on strong ground, which would make his enemy's superiority least available against him.

Both parties now prepared for the decisive conflict. On Friday, the English repaired and furbished their armour. The king gave a cheerful supper to his nobles ; and when they withdrew to their repose, he retired into his oratory, fell on his knees before its altar, and prayed God, that on the morrow, if they should fight, he might come off with honour. At midnight, he laid down on his couch. He rose early, and, with the prince of Wales, heard mass and communicated ; and the larger part of his army made their confessions. He moved to the ground near Cressy, which he had fixed upon, put his baggage in a park in the wood, in the rear of his army. He dismounted all his men, and put their horses in the same place. He divided his force into three divisions. To the first, consisting of 800 men at arms, 2000 archers, and 1000 Welshmen, he appointed the prince of Wales. They advanced in regular order to their ground ; each lord under his banner and pennon, and in the centre of his men. The second battalion, under the earl of Northampton and others, contained 800 men at arms, and 1200 archers. He made the third his own corps ; it had 700 men at arms, and 2000 archers. He mounted a small palfrey, and, with a white truncheon in his hand, attended by two marshals, he went from rank to rank, exhorting and entreating them to guard his honour and defend his right. He spoke so sweetly and so cheerfully, that even the disheartened became animated, as they beheld and heard him. He then bade them all eat, and drink a draught. They took their repast at their ease, resumed their ranks, and sat down, with their helmets and bows before them, that they might be fresher when the enemy arrived<sup>93</sup>.

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IV.

REIGN OF  
EDWARD III.

Prepares for  
the battle of  
Cressy.

The French king had, on the preceding evening, entertained his chief

<sup>93</sup> Froiss. c. 128. pp. 157—159.

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The battle.

chief lords, and urged them to mutual friendship. In the morning he heard mass at Abbeville, and marched to Cressy. He sent a party to reconnoitre Edward's position. The English observed their object, but let them make their observations unmolested. On their return, they advised the king to halt for the night, as evening was coming on, and his men were fatigued. The king assented; and his marshals rode to the front and rear, calling out, "Halt, banners, for the love of God and St. Denis." The front obeyed; but the rear pressing on them, the others were compelled to move forward. Neither the king nor the marshals could stop them; and all marched without any order, till they came in sight of the English. The foremost ranks then suddenly falling back, alarmed those in the rear, who thought they had been defeated; while others were eagerly pressing on, to show their courage. The confusion of the whole became indescribable<sup>94</sup>. Philip ordered the Genoese bowmen to begin the battle. They had marched six leagues that day, in complete armour, with their cross-bows, and were so fatigued that they told their commander they were not fit to do great exploits. The count d'Alençon, on this remark, peevishly exclaimed, "It is of much use to encumber oneself with such rabble, who always fail us in our greatest need." At this juncture a heavy rain and thunder storm came on, and darkened the sky, while large bodies of crows flew screaming through the air. Suddenly the sun shone out, but full in the face of the French. The Genoese, getting at last together, advanced with a loud shout to frighten the English, who heard it unmoved. They uttered another, and another, with as little effect; and then presenting their bows to shoot, the English archers stepped forward one pace, and discharged their arrows with such force and quickness, that they fell like snow, pierced the armour of the  
Genoese

<sup>94</sup> Froissart says, that no man can imagine or relate the disorder.



Genoese in every part, and made them turn back in disorder. Enraged at their retreat, the king of France called out to his men at arms, "Kill those scoundrels, for they stop our way without any use." His absurd order was obeyed. But the English arrows falling as heavily and as destructively amongst his superb cavalry, threw them into a similar confusion. The Welshmen rushed in upon them, in this state, with their large knives, and killed many of the French nobles before they could recover themselves. The old king of Bohemia, who had joined Philip, and was blind, had inquired of his knights, how the English were stationed? He was answered, that they stood in fine array, with the baggage behind them. "Then," said the experienced veteran, "they are resolved either to die in the field, or to be our conquerors: lead me near to some noble warrior, if you can, that I may have a blow with my sword." They complied with his wish, and linked his horse with theirs, that they might not be separated from him. They were all found dead together<sup>95</sup>.

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Two bodies of the French, under the earls of Alençon and Flanders, advanced more regularly against the prince's battalion; and some of them broke through his archers, and attacked his men at arms. Their number endangered him. A knight rode off to the king, who was posted at a windmill with his battalion, as a reserve, entreating his aid. "Is my son dead, unhorsed, or hurt?" No, sire; but he is hardly pressed, and needs your help. "Return, sir Thomas, and tell those who sent you, not to expect me while my son is alive: Tell them, that I command that they let my boy win his spurs; for I wish, if God has so ordained, that the day be his own, and that the honour rest with him, and those in whose care I have placed him." This noble answer redoubled the courage of those to whom it was reported; and the second division, aiding bravely

<sup>95</sup> Walsingh. p. 157. Froissart, c. 130. pp. 162—166

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bravely the prince's exertions, the victory was complete<sup>96</sup>. The king of France was wounded and unhorsed, and was carried off with difficulty. His army broke, and could not be rallied. Some wandered about, attacking the English in small parties, but they were soon destroyed. The English, being so greatly outnumbered, had determined that day to give no quarter. The slaughter was proportionably great<sup>97</sup>. The victors attempted no pursuit; they continued in their ranks. When the struggle was ended, the king came down from his post, embraced and kissed his gallant son, then scarcely sixteen years of age, and declared him worthy to be a sovereign. The prince bowed very low, and referred his success to his father's skill and resolution. They made great fires, and lighted torches through their camp. The king forbade all riot and noise, and the night was passed with much grateful devotion. A small party of French was the next day encountered and overpowered; and Edward now was enabled to march to Calais<sup>98</sup>.

Siege of  
Calais.

He sent to England for a supply of provisions<sup>99</sup>; and on 3d September 1346, encamped before Calais, to besiege it. He resolved to starve it into a surrender. He built a little town of wooden houses around it, with a market-place, for the comfort of

<sup>96</sup> Froissart's description of this battle has furnished the most interesting circumstances. c. 130.—Mag. Northbury says, it was "tres fort et endura longement gar les enemys se porterount mult noblement."

<sup>97</sup> Northbury enumerates among the slain, the king of Bohemia, the duke of Lorrain, the count d'Alençon, the count of Flanders, and eight other counts, two archbishops, and several lords and German barons. He adds, "the sum of the good gentz d'armes, who fell in the field this day, 'sans comunes et pedailles,' were 1,542." Avesbury, p. 138.—Froissart states, that the English reckoned

11 "chefs de princes," 80 banners, 1200 knights, and about 30,000 other persons. c. 132. p. 172.

<sup>98</sup> Froiss. c. 132. p. 173.

<sup>99</sup> Northbury.—He writes urgently: "The king requires of you provisions, and as soon as you can send them; because, since we left Caen, we have traversed the country with great labour and much damage to our people. But, thank God, we have had no defeat. But now we are in such a plight, that we need to be refreshed. Written before Calais, 4 Sept."



of his army. The governor, Jean de Vienne, perceiving his project, sent seventeen hundred of the poorer persons out of the town; and Edward, with a high-souled compassion, let them go, giving them a hearty dinner as they passed, and two sterlings to each individual<sup>100</sup>. A rare instance of generous warfare.

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While Edward was engaged at this siege, Philip excited David the king of Scotland to invade England with a large force<sup>101</sup>. David entered Durham, and advanced within three miles of Newcastle, where the English army had collected. Both parties drew out their battle-array at Neville's Cross. Edward's queen, Philippa, was with the English, and remained on the field till they were formed into four grand divisions, and till she had entreated them to do their duty. She then retired, recommending them to the protection of Heaven and St. George. Three of the divisions were under the command of prelates, Durham, York, and Lincoln. But in the reign of this martial prince, the spirit of the country emulated his own, and the clergy became greatly secularized in their manners. The battle lasted three hours. It ended in the total defeat of the Scots; the capture of their king, and many noblemen; and in a great destruction of the inferior classes<sup>102</sup>.

Battle of  
Neville's  
Cross;  
17 Oct. 1346.

The

<sup>100</sup> Froiss. 133. p. 175. This author, so minute in all his circumstances, does not mention that Edward used cannon at the battle of Cressy. I have therefore not alluded to them, as the more recent Italian author, Villani, who notices them, is not a sufficient authority. The first use of artillery will be considered in a subsequent chapter of this Work.

<sup>101</sup> Froissart states, that when all assembled, "Ils furent bien qu'uns qu'autres cinquante mille combatans." c. 137. I will not press the exactitude of his numbers, as he accompanies them with qualifying expressions. He enumerates the English who fought

there, as 1200 men at arms, 300 archers, and 7,000 others. p. 188.

<sup>102</sup> Froissart, c. 138. pp. 187—196. He notices about 15,000 of the Scots to have fallen. Knyghton makes them above 20,000, p. 2591.—Lord Hailes is not pleased that the queen should have shared in the honour of the battle, and wishes to doubt her presence, because Froissart is the *only* writer who states it. If we disbelieve all the facts of this reign, for which we have *only* Froissart's authority, our scepticism must take a large sweep. But that women could be heroines in that age, we have an instance in the countess of Montfort. See Froissart, c. 73. p. 277. c. 81. pp. 300—311.

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Philip  
attempts  
to relieve  
Calais.

The king of France collected a powerful force, to relieve Calais. Edward observed that there were but two roads by which Philip could approach the city; over the downs by the sea side, or through the country, that was full of ditches and bogs, with only one bridge. He planted his fleet along the shore, with their engines, so that no army could pass there without destruction; and he stationed a powerful force to guard the bridge. Philip reconnoitred the country and posts very often, but was advised that it was impossible to penetrate to the city, without a ruinous loss of men. Reluctantly he was obliged to decamp, and leave Calais to its fate. Its garrison had endured the greatest sufferings, with the hope of relief. But when they beheld the French banners retiring, they saw that protracted resistance would be unavailing, and they demanded a parley. Sir Walter Manny informed them, that no conditions could be allowed. The governor appealed to the merit of his loyalty to his own master, and to the gallantry of the English king. Edward at last consented, that if six of the principal citizens came out with bare heads and feet, and with the keys in their hands, and ropes round their necks, he would forgive the other inhabitants. It was difficult to find six townsmen who would devote themselves for the rest. At last, Eustace St. Pierre, one of the wealthiest in the place, magnanimously offered himself. His example excited five other kindred spirits. They left the walls amid the groans, tears, and blessings of their fellow-citizens, and were conducted to the presence of the king.

Surrender of  
the city.

The recollection of his losses in the siege, and of the injuries which his people had formerly suffered from the ships of the town, counteracted his usual generosity. He eyed them with angry looks, and ordered their heads to be struck off. Sir Walter Manny had the spirit to tell him, "You have the reputation, sire, of great nobleness of soul; tarnish it not by such an act of cruelty as this."

The



The king was inexorable, and the executioner was sent for. His pregnant queen then fell at his feet, and begged their lives, as a gift of his love to her. He gazed at her for some time in silence. His better feelings at last triumphed, and he exclaimed, "I give them to you, do as you please with them." She released them, cheered them with a courteous entertainment, clothed them, and had them escorted safely out of the camp<sup>103</sup>. Three years afterwards, Philip attempted to regain Calais by treachery. Edward received information of it, and went himself, with his son, privately into the town. They sallied out on the advancing French, and, after an arduous conflict, in which the king was twice struck to the ground in a personal combat with Eustace de Ribeaumont, the French were foiled<sup>104</sup>.

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The war was continued with France, with intermissions, for several Battle of  
Poitiers;  
19 Sept. 1356.

<sup>103</sup> Froiss. c. 146. pp. 221—227.—Knyghton's account of the surrender is, that the knights came out with bare heads and reverted swords, and the burghers with ropes in their hands, as a sign that the king might hang them if he pleased; and that they cried out with a loud voice, that they had traitorously defended the place against him. The king, 'misericordia motus,' received them into his grace. p. 2595. They had defended the town nearly eleven months. Mons. L'Evesque thinks Froissart's incidents more poetical than historical; but the verification of some of the names of the citizens, in the arguments brought against him, is strong evidence in his favour. Knyghton's 'misericordia motus' leaves a large blank for Froissart's 'quomodo.' The Scala Chronica rather supports Froissart: "The capitayne and burgeses of the toune cam with halteres about theyr nekkes, submitting themself to king Edwarde." p. 562. So the contemporary poet Minot:—

Lystens

Lystens now, and ye may lere  
Als men the suth may understand.  
The knyghtes that in Calais were,  
Come to sir Edward sare wepand;  
In kirtell one and swerd in hand,  
And cried, 'Sir Edward, thine we are,  
'Do now, lord, bi law of land,  
'Thi will with us for evermare.'

The noble burgase and the best  
Come unto him to have thaire hire.  
The comun pcple war ful prest,  
Rapes to bring about thaire swire.

Minot, p. 37.

The more ancient historian of France, Paulus Emilius, inserts Froissart's account in his Hist. Franc. p. 283.

<sup>104</sup> Froiss. c. 151. p. 246.—The king entertained the French prisoners with a supper. The prince of Wales and the English knights served up the first course, and waited on their guests: at the second, they went to another table, and were themselves attended. The king gave Ribeaumont a chaplet of fine pearls. Ib. c. 152. p. 247.

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several years afterwards<sup>105</sup>. Philip died, and his son John succeeded. In his reign, in 1356, the prince of Wales made an attack from Guienne, which led to the memorable battle of Poitiers. The inhumanities of war so invariably accompany its glories, that the mind is perplexed how to applaud the bravery of gallant actions, without injury to social sympathy. In the prince's letter, we read, that in a progress of operations in two months, on the whole course of the Garonne, from Bourdeaux to Narbonne, he had taken 500 villages, and many great cities and walled towns, and, in both going and returning, had laid the country waste by fire. The people of Montpellier fled to Avignon for safety; and the Pope, who resided there, doubting his own security, had all the gates of his palace covered with iron. His holiness offered the prince money, to spare Perigord. Edward answered, that his father had plenty of money, and did not want that; but that he would do what he came to perform, which was, the chastisement of those who were in rebellion against his right<sup>106</sup>. Inspired by his successes, the prince entered Auvergne, and penetrated to Berri, plundering, burning and destroying all around. The king of France summoned all his feudal nobles and tenants to attend him, and advanced towards the English, who had now entered Touraine, and were preparing to retreat through Poitou. The prince, satisfied that he had dared and

<sup>105</sup> The Scots, at times, renewed their incursions. Her king David was conducted to the Tower of London, in a public procession, with a pomp calculated to make a great impression. He was placed on a high black horse, to be seen by all; and twenty thousand well-arrayed soldiers, and the companies of London, dressed in their best costumes, and with their appropriate insignia, attended him. Knyghton, 2592.—Robert, the steward or seneschal of Scotland, was made regent. Hailes 221; and see his Annals, to page 241, for the incidents preceding 1357.

<sup>106</sup> See the prince's letter in Avesbury, 211—218. Let us, however, rejoice, that the campaigns of the duke of Wellington have, in our days, been as distinguished for their humanity, forbearance, and even kindness towards our enemies, as for their military glory. In this combination of the generous with the martial virtues, Wellington has excelled the Black Prince, and presented a noble example for the instruction and imitation of Europe.



and achieved enough, hastened his movements back, to escape the approaching force. His foragers were prevented, by the vicinity of the French army, from getting supplies at a distance; and the English, from their great want of provisions, began to lament their own ravages<sup>107</sup>.

The prince, informed that the French were pressing rapidly upon him, called in his stragglers, and ordered that no one, on pain of death, should advance or skirmish before the line of the marshals. On this day, Saturday, he marched from nine o'clock to vespers, when they came within two leagues of Poitiers. He sent out a detachment, to observe the station of the French; and being informed, on its return, that their numbers were immense, he answered with steady resolution, "May God then assist us! we must now consider how to fight them most to our advantage<sup>108</sup>." He took a strong position, that night, among vineyards and hedges. The next morning, the king of France sent Eustace de Ribaumont to reconnoitre them. His answer was, "They are about 2000 men at arms, 4000 archers, and 1500 footmen. They are in a strong position, and have arranged themselves very wisely; they have placed themselves along the road, fortified by hedges and shrubs; they have lined the hedges with part of their archers, so that to attack them you must pass through the midst of these, for the lane has no other entrance or exit, and is so narrow that scarcely four men can ride through it abreast. At the end of the lane, amidst vines and thorns, where it is impossible to make a progress, their men at arms are posted, with archers drawn up before them like a harrow." He recommended a body of the bravest of the French to be selected, to break, if possible, the archers, and to be followed by a rapid advance of all the battalions, dismounted<sup>109</sup>.

The

<sup>107</sup> Froiss. c. 159. p. 303.      <sup>108</sup> Ib. p. 306.

<sup>109</sup> Ib. c. 160. p. 309. I have inserted the speech of Eustace, as it describes so fully the

judicious position of the prince, and makes the result of the great conflict intelligible and natural.

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The French were divided into three bodies, each consisting of 16,000 men at arms. King John put on his royal armour, and nineteen were arrayed like him. An attempt was made by a French cardinal to negotiate; but John would hear of nothing but unconditional surrender, and the prince disdained such terms. The French passed their Sunday in abundant feasting, the English in great privation; but they made many mounds and ditches round their archers, to keep them more secure. The prince continued his positions as Eustace had described them, with the additions of putting 300 men at arms, and as many archers, on horseback, on a small hill on the right, to get round the wing of the second French division, which was on foot, at the bottom of the eminence. He also kept a few valiant and skilful knights on horseback; and, taking his station with the main body in the vineyard, he harangued his men, and awaited the formidable attack. His whole army did not exceed 8000 persons. The French were 60,000, or, more probably, 40,000<sup>110</sup>.

The eagerness of the French to engage, prevented the execution of Ribaumont's plan. Their first battalion advanced before those who were to break the archers, and entered the lane which they lined. The English waited till they were completely in it, and then from both hedges shot their arrows with such strength and certain aim, that the horses plunged unruly from the path, turned back, and were unmanageable. Their masters were at the mercy of their opponents; and the whole division was in confusion and discomfiture, unable either to advance or extricate themselves. Their rear recoiled in disorder and alarm on the second division that was coming up. The English arrows poured down upon these like hail. The French did not know where to turn, either to escape  
or

<sup>110</sup> Froiss. c. 161. pp. 316—318. But the battle, "de omne populo," were 40,000. Knyghton says the number of the French in p. 2615.



or to get forward ; and in this crisis of hesitation, the English body on the hill, who were watching for such a moment, came suddenly down, and charged vigorously on the French wing. Panic now thinned the discouraged assailants in every part. The prince was advised to seize the auspicious opportunity. He called out, " Banners, advance in the name of God and St. George !" and rushed with the men at arms on the confused and dismayed enemy. The severest exertion of the battle now came on. The French fought in parts desperately, exclaiming, " Mont joye ! St. Denis !" The English answered with, " St. George ! Guienne<sup>111</sup> !" Swords, battle-axes, arrows and spears, were mingled with destructive energy. It was now rather a massacre than a battle. The English became weary of striking and killing ; the archers exhausted all their arrows, and took up stones, and whatever they could seize near them, that was likely to be destructive. The French at last fled generally, and the exhausted English stood refreshing and recovering themselves ; when king John made a rally in despair, and came suddenly with a large body on the part where the prince was remaining with only a few around him. For a while he was in imminent danger ; but the earl of Warwick, returning from his pursuit with his battalion, charged on the king's flank, and completed the victory<sup>112</sup>. John fought vigorously with his battle-axe ; but he was at last surrounded and overpowered, and the French dispersed at every point.

The pursuit and slaughter was continued to the gates of Poitiers, and the prince was at last gratulated, that his victory was complete. His banner was then placed upon a high bush. The minstrels began to play, and the trumpet and clarions to sound. The prince took off his helmet ; his knights soon pitched a small crimson pavilion, which he entered ; wine was brought for his refreshment ; and in a short

Noble conduct of the  
Black Prince.

<sup>111</sup> Froiss. c. 162. p. 325.

<sup>112</sup> Knyghton, p. 2613.

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short time the captured king of France was introduced. The prince received him with a low obeisance, comforted him for the event of the battle, and presented him with a cup of wine and spices with the kindest courtesy <sup>113</sup>. At night a supper was prepared. The prince served the king's table himself with the humblest attentions; declined to sit down in his presence, as he desired; complimented him on the personal bravery he had displayed, surpassing the best of his followers; and assured him, that his father would shew him every honour and friendship, and arrange with him so reasonably as to perpetuate their future amity. The French felt the nobleness of the prince's generous courtesy, and proclaimed him "un gentil seigneur" <sup>114</sup>. The prince fell back to Bourdeaux; and England was thrown into an ecstasy of admiration and delight at this splendid victory <sup>115</sup>.

It was indeed grand and admirable. It had been obtained by all the combinations of true greatness of martial mind—judgment, skill, resolution, perseverance, activity, and valour of the most exalted degree. But that in the tumult and exultations of a success so glorious, the prince of Wales should have exerted that rare self-command; should have calmed his internal emotions to such courteous modesty, such polished humility; and, after the fatigues of so exhausting a day, should have soothed the poignant feelings of his royal captive by personally waiting upon him as a great and honoured guest—displays a moral sublimity more rare and more difficult than even the heroic valour and military sagacity by which

<sup>113</sup> Froiss. c. 163. p. 338. King John's son was taken with him.

<sup>114</sup> Froiss. c. 163. Mr. Johnes has added to his translation of Froissart, from an extract taken from the convent of the freres Mineurs in Poitiers, a list of the French knights who fell in the battle: The first is "the duke of Athens, constable of France." pp. 347—350.

<sup>115</sup> "Solemn thanksgivings were offered up in all the churches, and bonfires made in every town and village. Those knights and squires who returned to England, after having been in this battle, were honoured in preference to any others." Froissart. Johnes, p. 356.



which the fabled exploits of an Amadis had been almost brought into a real existence. The highest refinement of the chivalric character was never more brilliantly displayed. But Edward and his son were its most perfect models; and with them it disappeared. The heroism, without the polish, survived awhile in Du Guesclin; but their combination expired with the Black Prince. Qualities, more beneficial to society, took their place in the human character. Courtesy and intellect became afterwards united in the perfect gentleman, instead of courtesy and war; and the more widely the association of the gentle virtues, with cultivated mind, is diffused, the improvement and the felicity of mankind will be proportionately advanced. Our commercial spirit has given an importance to mere wealth, which has diffused an alloy of sensuality and vulgar pride. But it is probable that even these debasing exotics will be subdued by the increasing influence of literature; and that the combination of courtesy, intellect, and virtue, will yet exhibit a perfection in the human character, which as yet has only been individually obtained <sup>116</sup>.

After spending the winter at Bourdeaux, the accomplished prince conducted his prisoners to England. King John was placed in a ship by himself, to be more at his ease, and landed at Sandwich. The English sovereign prepared to receive him with every demonstration of honour and respect. The citizens of London dressed their companies with their richest decorations. The king of France was seated upon a white courser, with superb trappings, and, with the prince of Wales on a small black horse by his side, passed through London to the Savoy, his allotted residence. Edward and his queen made him frequent visits, and

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<sup>116</sup> The modesty with which the prince spoke of his extraordinary victory, appears in his letter to the bishop of Worcester upon it, printed in Archæol. vol. 1. p. 213, and inserted by Mr. Johnes in his Froissart, p. 353.

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and the most sumptuous entertainments were provided for his recreation<sup>117</sup>.

The victory at Poitiers had enriched the Black Prince and his country with high warlike celebrity, but had no other effect on France than to produce internal feuds, from the imprisonment of its king. His son Charles was made regent, and his subjects refused all national sacrifices for his deliverance. Four years after the great victory, Edward invaded France, from Calais, with 100,000 men; and if kingdoms were overturned by arithmetical calculations, it might have been expected that if 8,000 English could defeat 40,000 French and capture their king, 100,000 English must conquer France. But the events of war defy all military and political arithmetic. The young regent provided his chief towns with provisions and troops, and abstained from all pitched battles; and though the English moved on with the bravest army in Europe, under their heroic king and prince, the first warriors of their day, they could only plunder and advance. Resolute not to fight an enemy so superior in strength, discipline, and constancy, Charles permitted them to approach even to the gates of Paris, without departing from his defensive system. He knew that nature and industry would repair their ravages; but that an active campaign must consume their army. Edward, finding permanent conquest impossible, accepted of the mediation of the pope's legate, and the peace of Bretigny was concluded, which annulled all former treaties, and put the relations of the two countries on a new foundation<sup>118</sup>. By this treaty, Gascony and Guienne, the earldom of Ponthieu and Guisnes, Calais and its dependencies,

<sup>117</sup> Froiss. c. 173. pp. 368—370.—The king of Scotland was about this time released from prison, and was eagerly welcomed by his subjects. Ib. 372.

<sup>118</sup> On this campaign, see Froissart, c. 207—213. vol. 3, of Johnes's translation, pp. 1—61.



dependencies, the isles of the British channel, and some minor places, were assured to the king of England, with a renunciation of all feudal homage. Edward on his part abandoned all claim to the crown of France, and to Normandy, Bretagne, and Flanders. John was to be released, and three millions of crowns of gold to be paid for his ransom<sup>119</sup>.

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The great impeachment of the merit of the Black Prince is the war which he undertook in Spain, to replace Don Pedro the Cruel on the throne of Castile. Pedro, by the admission of all the contemporary writers, is represented to have been one of those monsters which recal to us the brutal ferocity of uncivilized man; and seem only fitted to appear in the romances of writers who prefer the horrible to the natural. After destroying his brothers, and many of his nobles, he first imprisoned and then murdered his wife, the sister of the queen of France<sup>120</sup>. This last crime could not be palliated; and it excited the strongest sensibility in the court of France, and a desire of punishing a man whose life was a satire on his species<sup>121</sup>.

Peter the  
Cruel.

At this period the celebrated Du Guesclin was in great credit with

Dethron'd by  
Du Guesclin.

<sup>119</sup> The treaty of Bretigny, at full length, is inserted in Rymer's *Fœdera*, vol. 6.—Dr. Brady translated it into English, with notes; and it has been copied into Tindal's translation of Rapin.

<sup>120</sup> The *Memoires de Du Guesclin*, vol. 4. p. 82, and Froissart's, are contemporary accounts of the crimes of Pedro. Both give the popular traditions, as well as the facts of history, concerning him; and one of the former may be his hatred of Christianity, and his attachment to the Jews. The *Memoires* detail the queen's murder by a party of Jews, with circumstances which have all the air of romance. 89—100. Mariana ascribes it to poison, administered by a physician at Pedro's command. l. 17. c. 4.

<sup>121</sup> Rodericus Santius seems half disposed to lessen the odium against Peter; but he confesses his hatred to the queen, caused by his concubine Maria de Padilla, on which he tells an absurd story, and attributes it to magic. He also admits, that on his brothers and prelates striving to reconcile them, he banished some, slew others, and filled his kingdom, with the blood of his nobility. Pars 3. c. 14. But, though he says the queen died with grief, he details, in his next chapters, a series of his detestable murders, extending even to the king of Granada. c. 16.—Mariana has preserved a full history of Pedro's actions, l. 16. c. 16—21, and l. 17. c. 1—13.

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with his sovereign<sup>122</sup>; and it may be conceived, that he who on his death-bed, after a life of warfare, told his officers to recollect that “in whatever country they waged war, neither the clergy, nor the women, children, nor poor people, were their enemies,” was roused to all the heroism of his chivalric character, when he heard of the conduct of a prince so debased<sup>123</sup>. The state of France favoured the gratification of his feelings. France was then ravaged by those bands of military adventurers, the disbanded soldiers of the preceding wars, who, associating together under leaders of their own appointment, attacked and ravaged various parts of France, with no other object than that of plunder. They were composed of Germans, English, Bretons, Navarrese, Gascons, and Flemings. They were formidable for their valour, their former victories, and their experience; and their successes alarmed the French government as much as they distressed the French people<sup>124</sup>. Du Guesclin beheld

<sup>122</sup> Bertrand Du Guesclin was as renowned in the popular traditions of France, as Wallace in those of Scotland. The *Memoires* of him are a reprint of Lefebvre's scarce publication, which the author composed from documents of the fourteenth century, written by Guesclin's contemporaries. They are sometimes high coloured.

<sup>123</sup> The account of Guesclin's infancy and education is as picturesque as any romancer could wish. It gives us the intractable, untameable, infant Achilles; the rude uncultivated hero in embryo, and nothing but the hero. And as the *Memoires* shew that “le fameux connetable ne savoit pas lire,” the rough features which it sketches may not be fictitious. He was, in fact, a French Richard Cœur de Lion; the warrior of a century back; and a complete contrast to the polished heroism of his competitor and conqueror, the Black Prince. It was the remark of others besides his mother, “qu'il avoit plus l'air d'un bouvier que d'un gentil-

homme.” War was his element and sole delight, and in this he transcended all his countrymen; and when the Black Prince became disabled, Guesclin wrested from England nearly all its conquests in France. See his infancy, in the *Memoires du Guesc.* c. 1. pp. 345—363.

<sup>124</sup> *Mem. Guesclin*, c. 16. They were called the White Companies, from the white cross they wore on their shoulder. *Ib.* p. 118. These armed bodies began to appear in France about the year 1360. The alarm they excited was so great, that the *Songe du Verdier* charges them with roasting infants and old people, when no one would ransom them. The editor of the *Memoires* has preserved two Latin hymns to the Virgin, for deliverance from their fury, vol. 5. p. 286; and see Froissart on them, vol. 1. c. 230; also Walsingham, pp. 171 & 175. Sir John Hawkwood, an Englishman, led one of these bands into Italy, and acquired great reputation there. *Wals.* 179.



beheld them with the eye of a superior genius, and perceived at once that if he could be allowed to prosecute his desired enterprise, of delivering Spain from the cruelties of Peter, by their instrumentality, he might not only punish the unworthy king, but liberate his own country from the depredations of men who were oppressing it merely because they wanted military employment. He had two difficulties to overcome, to accomplish his wishes: he had to persuade them to enlist in his adventure, and the king of France to confide it to his care, with them for his assistants. The obvious policy of a measure that would lead these dangerous troops out of France without hostility, concurred, with the high character of Du Guesclin for probity and loyalty, to secure the approbation of the French king. It remained to treat with the marauders, who were then encamped near Chalons. Du Guesclin sent a herald, to request permission to visit them. His warlike reputation easily obtained it. He found their chiefs at table. They hailed him with acclamations; he drank with them, and proposed his enterprise. The unknighly crimes of Peter were felt by all; and when he accompanied his proposal to unite to punish him, with a promise from the king of France that they should have 200,000 livres for their just reward, and that he would exert himself to obtain from the Pope an absolution from their former sins, they unanimously adopted the adventure, the English knights only bargaining that they might be required to undertake nothing against the prince of Wales their lord. Guesclin left them with assurances, that he would fulfil all his engagements with them; and their answer was, that they had more confidence in him than in all the prelates in France or at Avignon <sup>125</sup>.

The

<sup>125</sup> Mem. Guesclin, c. 16. pp. 100—105. Some of their leaders were English knights. The names of sir Hugues Caurelay, sir Matthew de Gournay, sir Nicolas Strambant, sir Robert Scot, Sir Oliver Manny, and the

Green Knight, appear among them.—Froissart states, that Guesclin's ransom, 100,000 francs, was paid to sir John Chandos, to enable him to undertake the expedition. c. 230.

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The leaders were admitted to pay their respects to the French king, who received them with judicious courtesy. They restored the castles they had taken, and were marched to Avignon. But while France was blessing her hero for her deliverance from their presence, the pope and his cardinals at Avignon became alarmed in the same proportion at their approach. A cardinal was sent, to inquire the cause of their visit. He was informed, that they wanted absolution, and 200,000 livres to pay the charges of the holy war they had undertaken. The first demand would have been easily complied with; the latter occasioned a pause. But it was obvious to the holy father, that, with warriors of their temper, delay only increased the evil of his situation. The money was raised; the absolution given; and Guesclin conducted his formidable troops safely over the Pyrenees <sup>126</sup>.

The conduct of Peter had occasioned Henry of Tristemarre, his reputed natural brother, to aspire to the throne. But Peter's influence and strength had expelled Henry from Castile; and the king of Arragon not daring to receive him, he had fled to a remote castle, living in hourly danger of falling into the hands of his enemy. The arrival of Du Guesclin dispersed his alarms, and animated his hopes. He accompanied them into Spain. Their victorious arms beat down all opposition; the Castilians welcomed Henry and his friends as their deliverers; and Peter fled the country <sup>127</sup>.

Peter  
resolves to  
visit the  
Black Prince.

This unworthy prince was as sagacious as he was unprincipled, and he contrived to make the very circumstance of Du Guesclin's invading him, the means of retrieving his affairs. The Black Prince was then in those parts of France which he had conquered.

The

<sup>126</sup> Mem. Guesclin, pp. 106—114.

<sup>127</sup> The Mem. Guesclin, from p. 119 to 186, gives a popular account of these transactions, heightened with many traits of colloquial

imagery. The less interesting, but more sober narratives of Rodericus Santius and Mariana, may be consulted for the authentic particulars.



The most brilliant part of his life had been passed in competition with the French power; and the natural jealousy of its revival, and of the excelling fame of any of its warriors, would most probably excite him to espouse any side which was in opposition to them. It was on this operation of human nature that the Spanish tyrant calculated, and his calculation was unfortunately right. We have no need of the less honourable tale, of the superb golden table which Peter carried with him, to account for the son of Edward adopting his cause<sup>128</sup>.

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When the prince heard that Peter, the king of Castile, was in his palace, an exile, soliciting an interview, he sent a knight to conduct him, and, with that peculiar courtesy which marked his accomplished character, he is stated, not to have waited till he approached him, but to have advanced half way to meet him. Peter was a profound adept in the art of dissimulation, and he assumed a behaviour the most fitted to impress the mind of his generous host. He came forward with a profound reverence; and with a countenance expressing the deepest distress. When requested to state his grievances, he pathetically painted his situation—driven from his throne—betrayed by his subjects—banished out of his own kingdom—the victim of perfidy, treason, and ingratitude. The tears that flowed copiously from his eyes, and the sobs that frequently interrupted his discourse, roused the best sympathies of Edward; and, without pausing to consider the personal conduct of the sufferer, the prince did not even permit him to finish, but desired him

He solicits  
his aid.

<sup>128</sup> This table of gold, adorned with jewels and the finest pearls of the East, the ransom of a king of Granada to one of Pedro's ancestors, and Edward's admiration and acceptance of it, might be classed amongst the popular tales of the age, invented to account for Edward's support of Don Pedro (see it described in the *Mem. Du Guescl.* pp. 149 & 192;) but that in the Black Prince's will

we have a superb table thus described: "We give and devise our great table of gold and silver, all full of precious relics, and in the middle a cross of the holy wood: The said table is garnished with stones and pearls; that is, with twenty-five rubies, thirty-four sapphires, fifty thick pearls, and many other sapphires, emeralds and small pearls, &c." *Royal and Noble Wills*, p. 71.

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him to re-cover his head, and indiscreetly promised him, that he would sacrifice his life in battle, if necessary, in order that his head should be again as completely covered with his crown as it now was with his hat. The gratitude of Peter was expressed as theatrically as his despair, and with equal effect on his illustrious host. The princess, who was at her toilet when the king arrived, heard of her husband's determination to support him with great sorrow, and she expressed warmly her surprise that the prince should have allowed himself to have been imposed upon by a man so criminal. Edward, on hearing of her displeasure, unfortunately misconceived its principle. "I see," exclaimed he, "that she wants me to be always at her side. But a prince who wishes to immortalize his name, must *seek* occasions to signalize himself in war, and must by his victories obtain renown among posterity. By St. George, *I will* restore Spain to its right inheritor<sup>129</sup>." A fatal determination, which brought a series of mortifications and a mortal disease upon himself, and dishonour to his country. It is in vain that conquerors attempt to gain triumphs by violating the rules of justice and humanity; their successes are ephemeral; their repentance is poignantly severe; their disgrace eternal.

Prince  
reinstates  
Peter.

The prince pursued his new object with his usual ability. He recalled from Henry and Du Guesclin all the English that had accompanied them; a severe blow, as these were their principal strength<sup>130</sup>; and with 17,000 men at arms, besides a great number of expert Genoese cross-bowmen, he entered Navarre<sup>131</sup>. But want of provisions soon distressed him, and Du Guesclin surprised and destroyed

<sup>129</sup> The Mem. Du Guesclin, 189—194, have preserved these circumstances; and, although the account of an enemy, yet, as they exactly correspond with the known character of Edward, they seem entitled to our

belief. See Froissart's account, in his 231st chapter.

<sup>130</sup> Froissart, c. 233 & 234.

<sup>131</sup> Froissart describes this campaign, c. 237—241.



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IV.REIGN OF  
EDWARD III.

destroyed his advanced guard that was plundering to obtain them. This success stimulated the other chiefs in Henry's service to oppose the advice of Guesclin, who recommended that nothing should be hazarded, but that the English should be left to consume away, from famine. Guesclin was piqued by the bravadoes of his opponents to depart from his cautious plan, and to risk a battle that was so essential to Edward's safety. The shock of the two contending heroes took place near Navarette. The skill, the discipline, and the valour of the Black Prince prevailed against all the exertions of Du Guesclin, who endangered himself, and was made prisoner, that Henry might escape<sup>132</sup>.

The re-establishment of Peter on the throne he had so much disgraced, was the consequence of this victory; and it was in perfect conformity with his previous character, that his future conduct towards the Black Prince should be marked with the basest ingratitude<sup>133</sup>. Personal vanity, a passion for fame, however earned, and a confidence in his own prowess, seem to have been the leading motives to Edward in forming this unnatural alliance with a man whose character was so unlike his own high-souled and generous disposition. His military qualities produced all the effects that it was natural should result from them, for Providence does not usually work by miracles; but other natural causes were also suffered to have their usual operation, to chastise the attempt to support a criminal so depraved. The climate of Spain diminished his army by disease, and fixed in his own constitution a malady from which he never recovered. For eight years this preyed upon his strength, and destroyed all his energies. Pedro had

Peter's  
ingratitude.

<sup>132</sup> Mem. Du Guescl. 196—226. Froissart portrays, with animation, Henry's speeches and valour, c. 241. Yet, considering that the Black Prince commanded, I am surprised that Froissart should say that Henry "felt

and knew well enough, that if he were taken, he would be killed without mercy."

<sup>133</sup> Mem. Du Guesclin, 227—237; and see Froissart, c. 242, 243.

PART  
III.  
REIGN OF  
EDWARD III.

The Black  
Prince takes  
Limoges.

had refused to pay his army, though it had enthroned him ; and to raise the money they wanted, the prince imposed a tax on his French dominions, which alienated them from their attachment to England, and urged them to solicit the protection of the French king. This produced a renewal of the war between England and France<sup>134</sup>. But now the Black Prince, who had so often conquered France in all her pride, was become but the shadow of himself, and was too enfeebled to mount his horse ; and his father was sinking into dotage. One action only signalized the last days of the dying hero, and it tarnished them still more than it adorned them. The revolt of Limoges excited his indignation. He summoned them to return to their duty, with a menace, that on their refusal he would rase their city to the ground, and put all the inhabitants to the sword. His summons was contumeliously treated, and he ordered the place to be invested. Too weak to ride, he was conveyed to the siege in a litter. With his usual success he undermined the walls, and his troops entered at the breach. The place became his own. But, unlike the magnanimous generosity of his former life, the whole garrison and 3000 of the inhabitants were even in his sight destroyed<sup>135</sup> ; and the town, after being pillaged, was burnt to ashes<sup>136</sup>. Having thus made his

<sup>134</sup> On the military events, and alternations that followed, in these parts, see Froissart, c. 244—286.

<sup>135</sup> Froissart's account is a melancholy one, and shews how little true virtue accompanied the chivalric character, even in its most refined state. The prince, his two brothers, and the army, entered over the breach. "Then you might have seen the plunderers run through the city, killing men, women, and children, *as they had been commanded*. You would have seen it with great pity, for, men, women and children, threw themselves on both knees *before the prince*,

crying Mercy ! but he was inflamed with so great an ardour, that he would not hear them. Neither sex was listened to, but all were put to the sword as they were met, and even those who were not at all blameable. There was no heart so hard but wept tenderly at the great mischief that was done, for above 3000 men, women and children, were that day destroyed. May God keep their souls, for they were really martyrs." c. 289.

<sup>136</sup> Mais fut toute la cite de Limoges courue, pillée et robée sans deport, et toute arse et mise en destruction." Froiss. c. 289.



his sun of glory set in blood, a night of increasing darkness followed. He was compelled to return home, with a vain hope that his native air would restore his health; and his brother, the duke of Lancaster, took the command of his French dominions. But disaster followed on disaster<sup>137</sup>. The heroic Du Guesclin, whom the prince, after a long captivity, admitted to ransom<sup>138</sup>, became

<sup>137</sup> Froissart imputes the loss of Gascony to the arrogance of the Black Prince and his friends. I will add his words, that I may not impeach so illustrious a character on less authority than that of an intelligent contemporary. After mentioning that the French king attracted the love of the great barons of Gascony by his mildness and liberality, he says, "and the prince of Wales lost them by his pride. From the time that I was at Bourdeaux, and that the prince went into Spain, I saw that the pride of the English was so great, that they treated no nations 'amiablement' but their own. The gentlemen of Gascony and Aquitaine, who had lost their property in the wars, could get into no office in their country. The English said, they were not cut out for any, nor worthy of any. It was from the harshness which the count d'Armagnac and the lord of Albreth found in the prince, that they became French, and many knights and esquires of Gascony also." vol. 3. c. 22. Yet Froissart adds, that they liked the English better than the French.

<sup>138</sup> The prince long refused to take any ransom for Guesclin, because he anticipated, that if he was at liberty he would renew the war with more vigour than ever. Hence he detained him a long while in prison. One day, conversing in a festive moment with his knights, he said, No person ought to attempt to escape without paying his ransom, and no conqueror ought to be too rigorous with his captive. An admirer of Guesclin remarked, that the world blamed him for an excess of

severity towards one prisoner. Edward felt it to allude to Guesclin, and, piqued at the observation, which implied a stain on his honour, he ordered Guesclin to be brought to him. He came in a coarse dress, his prison garment; and the prince, surprised at his rude appearance, contrary to his usual courtesy, received him with a laugh of derision. "It rests upon your pleasure, sire, when I shall be better clothed," said Guesclin. "I have a long time had only rats and mice for my companions; even to the songs of the birds I have been a stranger." Edward offered him liberty, on his swearing not to take arms in favour of France or of Henry. Guesclin refused to take an oath that would be disloyal, and pleaded the crimes of Pedro as the justification of his Spanish warfare. The prince, remembering that the public rumour was loud, that he kept him a prisoner because he feared him, declared, that to shew the world that he dreaded no man, he should have his liberty, on a proper ransom. Guesclin declared that his poverty left him no means of offering money at that time, but if he was released on his parole, he would appeal to the liberality of his friends to provide a competent sum. Edward, affected by his manly demeanour, said he would make him the arbiter of his own ransom. Guesclin, with a proud sense of his own dignity, at last fixed it at 60,000 florins (to the astonishment of the prince, who would have discharged him for 10,000 livres) declaring, that the king of France and Henry de Tristemarre, whom he had served, would pay it between them.

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III.  
REIGN OF  
EDWARD III.

Edward's  
final  
reverses.

Death of the  
Black Prince;  
1376.

became again the opponent of the English; and his abilities and valour advanced from success to success, till at length, by the enterprises, perseverance, and intrigues of the French, both the king and his son saw all their French dominions torn from the crown, with the exception of Calais and a few towns on the sea coast<sup>139</sup>.

No reign shews more strongly than Edward the Third's, the absurdity of military ambition. Though he repeatedly invaded France with armies that in number and quality seemed to be formed to divest incredulity of doubt; yet his inferior antagonists always found means to repel the danger of his incursions; to repair every ruinous defeat; and to prevent victory the most brilliant, from becoming permanent conquest.

When the war was renewed in 1369, after the peace of Bretigny, the campaign was unavailing<sup>140</sup>. In the next year a fine English army was sent, which closed its efforts with disasters<sup>141</sup>. In 1372, when the king went in person with a superb fleet to relieve Rochelle, the wind baffled his efforts, and an immense treasure was consumed in vain<sup>142</sup>. In the succeeding year, his second son, Lancaster, led an army, unresisted, even to the gates of Paris, but only to perish by famine and disease in its passage through Auvergne to Bourdeaux<sup>143</sup>. The revolt of all Gascony and its contiguities followed this campaign. The Black Prince lived to witness these reverses, and expired with unavailing regret. Thus Edward gained nothing but barren laurels, from a life of war and victory<sup>144</sup>. The blood, the happiness, and the lives of myriads, were wasted

them. Guesclin was liberated on his honour; and the city flocked to see a man, who had rated himself so highly. *Mem. Du Guesc.* p. 255—263.

<sup>139</sup> The Memoirs of Guesclin, 365—435, describe his campaigns against the English, with many interesting circumstances.

<sup>140</sup> Wals. 178.

<sup>141</sup> Wals. 179, 180.

<sup>142</sup> *Ib.* 182.

<sup>143</sup> *Ib.* 183.—Though he left Calais with 30,000 cavalry, very few horses reached Bourdeaux. *Ib.*

<sup>144</sup> Very different, both in principle and success, has been that war, or rather that unexampled campaign, which, while this

Work



wasted in the chase of a phantom—the crown of France—which he could never secure. He gained victories, when he least expected them; and he was disappointed in his hopes of conquest, when he had every worldly means of commanding it. But his project to unite the French and English sceptres contributed to increase that national animosity and rivalry between two of the most civilized nations of Europe, which no succeeding period has diminished. Ever ready to fight; prone to mistrust; happy to provoke, and emulous to lacerate each other; the two countries have, with few intermissions, maintained that mutual alienation of mind and manners, which has assisted to deteriorate the French character, by accustoming the nation to regard every thing English, even our imitable virtues, with jealousy and contempt. Can no state of things occur in either; no happier policy; no reciprocal utilities or necessities; no improvements in them or in ourselves—which will calm the mutual jealousies, assuage the vindictive feelings, nurture a more generous spirit, and inspire each with the love of peace and merited friendship; with liberal emulation and magnanimous benevolence? I am aware that the only true foundations of lasting amity between states, are national honour, individual virtue, and unambitious governments; and that France, misguided and misgoverned France, has lost the esteem and confidence of Europe, by abandoning those virtues which no country can safely spare. But her sad experience has written, in the history of all Europe, and in her own, the miseries of military ambition, of social irreligion, of political faithlessness, and of popular immorality<sup>145</sup>. A more auspicious period seems now to be evolving.

May

Work was printing, has been crowned with the battle of Waterloo, the conquest of Paris, and the capture of Buonaparte; and which we hope will be closed by the pacification of Europe. Wars of this nature are remedial, not aggressive. And yet, so tremendous are

the chances, and so uncertain the issue of all war, that even justifiable wars should be entered into with wise and deliberating reluctance; for who can foresee all their consequences?

<sup>145</sup> May not the surpassing glory with which

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REIGN OF  
EDWARD III.

May it prove a Pollian age! May France, by condescending to adopt some of the sterling virtues as well as the wise institutions of England, lay the true basis for the future concord of the two countries. Her political greatness will then arise from the same roots as our own, and tower as pre-eminently, and bloom as freshly. The world is large enough for the amplest celebrity and prosperity of both. But without the virtues which have given to England its energies and strength, France will never attain to more than a feverish and evanescent power. Its proudest fabric will be corroded in its centre, and fall again to the dust, from the corruption of its materials, and the uncorrected folly of its architects<sup>146</sup>. The

which the late successes have invested Great Britain, be intended to fix the eye of Europe on those moral and mental qualities, that rational piety, that venerable constitution, that regulated liberty, those wise laws and judicial customs, and those noble institutions and benevolent societies, which present, in the British islands, a more improved picture of society than any other part of the world has yet combined?

<sup>146</sup> The curious reader may like to see the stanzas which an old poet, Occleve, who flourished under Henry IV. and V. wrote, even in those reigns, lamenting the discord between these two nations:—

Of France and England, O cristen princes!  
Sithen that your stile of worthynesse is ronge  
Thurghout the world, in all the provynces;  
If that of you, myght be sadde or songe,  
That ye were *one in hert*, there is no tonge  
That myght expresse, How profitable and goode  
Unto the peple it were of cristen bloode!

Geve hem ensample. Ye ben her myrrours.  
They folowe you. What sorewe lamentable  
Is caused of your werres sharp shours!  
There wote no wight it is irreparable.  
O noble cresten princes! Honorable!  
For hym that suffred for your passion;  
Of Christes bloode, have compassion.

Alass! what peple hath your werre slayn!  
What cornes wasted, and, down trode shent!  
How many a wyfe and maid hath he forlayn?  
Castels down bete and tymbred houses brent,  
And drawen down and all to tore and rent!  
The harm ne may not rekened be ne tolde.  
This warre wexeth all to hore and olde.

Occleve, MS. Bib. Reg. 17 D 6.



The reign of Edward III. not only closed in disaster, but in personal disgrace; for it was degradation, that at the age of sixty-four, an age younger than that at which Edward I. had died, his parliament should find it necessary to treat him like an infant king. Yet so it was, that in 1376, the house of commons stated, that considering the mischiefs of the land, it would be to his honour and to the profit of the realm, aggrieved in various ways, for him to perceive that the officers who were accustomed to be at his side (his ministers) were not sufficient for so great a government, without other aid. The commons therefore prayed, that the royal council might be strengthened by the addition of a permanent council of ten or twelve other prelates and lords; that no important business might be done without the assent and advice of all these, and no minor business without the concurrence of at least six or four of them, and that these six or four should be continually resident with the king. This was so like the council of regency nominated on his accession, that it must have pained the royal mind to find its age accompanied with the guardian measure of its boyhood. But the king was obliged to declare, that, understanding the request to be honourable, and very profitable to him and his kingdom, he assented to it<sup>147</sup>. His grandson Richard, a child, was soon afterwards brought into parliament. The archbishop, more courteously than wisely, complimented him on the beauty of his person<sup>148</sup>; and he was made prince of Wales. Strong parliamentary remonstrances were made against the pope and cardinals<sup>149</sup>. A jubilee was in the next year proclaimed, because the king entered into the fiftieth year of his reign<sup>150</sup>; and a poll-tax was granted, to supply the necessities of the exchequer<sup>151</sup>.

Edward

CHAP  
IV.  
REIGN OF  
EDWARD III.  
His domestic  
mortifica-  
tions.

<sup>147</sup> See the record of these proceedings, in Parl. Plac. p. 322.

<sup>148</sup> Parl. Plac. p. 330.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid. p. 362.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid. p. 337.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid. p. 364.

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REIGN OF  
EDWARD III.

He degrades  
himself with  
Alice Peers.

Edward continued gradually to waste in disease, and publicly disgraced himself by a mistress, Alice Peers, who even presumed to counteract official orders<sup>152</sup>, to sit on the bench, and to dictate to the judges<sup>153</sup>. Her follies increased his unpopularity, and she was compelled to leave the king; but with an unroyal weakness he recalled her<sup>154</sup>; and her unfeeling selfishness was manifested by her behaviour in his last moments, which occurred at Sheene on 21 June 1377<sup>155</sup>.

The character of Edward has been displayed in the preceding incidents of his reign, which took their shape and colour from him and his son. They carried the chivalric temper to the highest improvement which it was capable of receiving; but were more useful in drawing the nation out of the ferocious habits of the mere warrior to the attempt at something better, than for having presented any useful standard of moral excellence to the practice of his people. For the evils of war they had no sympathy; of its justice they took no account; its pomp and glorious circumstances were their passion, and the excitement and applause of its great exertions were their highest gratifications. But they improved the knightly character by the addition of qualities which would not suffer it to be stationary; the gallantry, courtesy, and generosity, which they combined with war, soon separated from their fierce companion, and sought a more intellectual alliance. In every succeeding reign the warlike disposition became less and less a gentlemanly accomplishment; society began to feel that the character

<sup>152</sup> See the accusations in Parl. Plac. vol. 3. p. 12.

<sup>153</sup> Wals. 186.—She caused the Speaker of the house of commons to be imprisoned for his censures on her. *Ib.*

<sup>154</sup> Wals. 187.

<sup>155</sup> She permitted him to have no religious attentions, chusing to believe that his health

would be re-established. When she observed his voice to fail, his eyes to become glazed, and his limbs to be chilling, she pulled his rings from his fingers, and went away. A priest found him still sensible, but speechless. But he kissed the cross, and wept, before he expired. Wals. 189.



character which was useful as the occasional protector, ought not to be its daily humour. The soldier became gradually set apart from the nobleman, the courtier, the gentleman, and the citizen. The blessings of peace, and the arts of acquiring them, were in time more generally understood, and more truly appreciated and sincerely pursued. Not indeed that this happy change could be instantaneous or complete; the evils of civil wars were first experienced, before the nation subsided into the popular love of social tranquillity; but the close of the reign of Edward III. may be dated as the period when this moral regeneration began. That he had reigned with much nobleness and valour, and deserved to be placed among the ancient heroes, was the generous confession of the king of France, his political antagonist<sup>156</sup>; the offer of the imperial crown, was the testimony of Germany to his personal merits and renown<sup>157</sup>; and the general feeling of Englishmen, that few sovereigns have combined so many public and private virtues, is that consummation of his celebrity from those who are the best qualified to award it, which no criticism can destroy, nor any rhetorical panegyric satisfactorily enhance.

<sup>156</sup> Charles V. This king, who delighted in the society of men of science, having heard that there was a great philosopher and alchemist at Avignon, sent for him to court.

The retired and contented student answered, That he was happier in his poverty, eating

cabbages and radishes, and speculating on philosophy, than he could be if loaded with riches and honours. Mem. Christ. Pisan. p. 215.

<sup>157</sup> Scala Chron. 562.—That he instituted the Order of the Garter is well known.

# HISTORY

## OF

# E N G L A N D.

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## C H A P. V.

HISTORY OF THE REIGN OF RICHARD THE SECOND,  
SURNAMED RICHARD OF BOURDEAUX.

1377—1399.

PART  
III.

**T**HE reign of Richard II. began with all the splendour and rejoicings of a prosperous and delighted people. His age, eleven, was interesting; his countenance handsome; his boyish manners engaging; and he was the son of the beloved Black Prince. With such claims to popularity, it will surprise us to find that few princes have been pursued with greater maledictions from their people, or ended their scene of dignity more calamitously. Part of his misfortunes arose from the period in which he lived, and from the measures of his predecessor, whose consequences his government had to bear. But these might have been surmounted by a fair exertion of intelligence and integrity in his ministers, and by steady decorum in his personal conduct. His worst adversities sprang from himself, from the defects of his unfolding character; from allowing young favourites to be his directing counsellors; from obstinacy in error; from a proud and passionate spirit, imperious



imperious and vindictive; from the wilful commission of wrong, and from the national belief that he had become unprincipled and incorrigible.

CHAP.  
V.

REIGN OF  
RICHARD II.

His splendid  
entrance into  
London.

His first entrance into London from Sheene was a day of magnificence, gratulation, and festivity. His bishops, knights, and nobles, attended him in solemn procession. Seated on a fine courser royally apparelled, its bridle guided by one knight on foot, and preceded by another, bearing on high his sword, Richard moved on, with his young friends and courtiers immediately behind him, happy, honoured, and applauded. Every portion of the train was led by its clarions and trumpets continually sounding. The citizens filled the public aqueducts with wine, which was allowed to flow profusely through their pipes for three hours and a half, the time of the cavalcade. The populace crowded with loud and eager shouts, hailing their young king, and revelling in their indulgencies. In the market at Cheapside, a castle was displayed with four towers, two of which also poured around gratuitously its vinous streams. On the towers stood four beautiful maidens of elegant stature, clothed in white, wafting leaves of gold into the king's face as he approached, and showering down light golden coins upon him and his horse, as he came nearer. All the clarions and trumpets sounded at that moment together, in every part enrapturing the stout and warlike ears of the boisterous and bustling population. As the king stood before the triumphal castle, the lovely virgins, descending to greet him, filled their golden cups from its flowing canals, and offered them to their sovereign and his lords. On the summit of the castle appeared an angel shining in gold, and holding out a golden crown in his hand: when the king came under him, the mechanism moved, and the loyal seraph bent respectfully down, and placed the crown upon his head. Every street vied with each other in its decorations

PART  
III.  
REIGN OF  
RICHARD II.

His coro-  
nation.

His first  
parliament.

decorations and pageants; and the city rang from end to end with tumult, martial music, popular huzzas, and festive merriment, every class emulous of joy and vociferation, till the king reached the royal palace at Westminster<sup>1</sup>, where at last he rested after his fatiguing, enrapturing, but not, perhaps, improving day.

His coronation, in the following year, gave another exhibition of national hilarity and customary splendour<sup>2</sup>, with a new circumstance of popular gratification. In the middle of the royal palace, a column, apparently marble, was raised, supporting a great eagle gilt, and hollow above the pedestal. Under the feet of the royal bird, and from the capitol of the pillar, four sorts of wine were made to flow the whole day of the coronation, and the poorest person was permitted to partake of the welcomed bounty<sup>3</sup>. Such was the public magnificence of our ancestors in those times, when the gratifications of the senses prevailed over those of the intellect and sentiment<sup>4</sup>.

The archbishop of Canterbury opened the parliament that was soon assembled, with an harangue more like a sermon than a statesman's speech; but it was meant to be popular, and its topics were

<sup>1</sup> Walsing. Hist. Ang. p. 192.

<sup>2</sup> Wals. pp. 193—197.—This author describes minutely the ceremonies of his coronation. One part kept alive the ancient custom of the popular election of the sovereign. After the king had taken the coronation oath, the archbishop, the marshal of England preceding him, “turned himself to all sides of the church, showing to the people the royal oath, and asking, if they would submit themselves to such a prince and ruler, and obey his commands? And the people answered with a loud acclamation, that they would willingly obey him.” Wals. p. 193.

<sup>3</sup> The Monk of Evesham remarks, that

the pomp of the coronation was such as had rarely been seen before. Hist. Rich. II. p. 1. How far it was wise may be questioned; when we find, that, anticipating the future complaint of parliament on the royal applications for money, the ministers stated, that one part of the expenditure arose from the great cost of the coronation. Plac. Parl. p. 35.

<sup>4</sup> Wals. p. 196.—The king made nine knights and four earls this day: his uncle Thomas, earl of Buckingham, with a pension of a thousand marks; his former master, Giffard, earl of Huntingdon, with a similar allowance; Mowbray, earl of Nottingham; and Percy, earl of Northumberland. Ib.



were in general soothing and gracious<sup>4</sup>. John of Gaunt, the duke of Lancaster, the king's eldest uncle, attended with his title 'King of Castile and Leon,' and, kneeling before the king, complained that the house of commons had spoken so ill of him as to impute treason to his conduct—that he had committed none, and was ready to defend his honour with his body, as if he were but the poorest person in the kingdom. The prelates and lords interfered, and begged the duke to desist. The commons declared that they had acquitted him of all blame, as they had chosen him to be one of the lords whom they wished to aid and protect them; and their Speaker<sup>5</sup> then stated the public grievances on which he felt it right, or was authorized, to remonstrate. These were principally, that the chivalry of the kingdom had been discouraged and undervalued, and vice advanced; and that the kingdom had been better protected, and the navy greater, when the merchants had the disposition of their own ships. He asked, in the name of the commons, that counsellors should be appointed to consider of these evils. And, as if with an eye of prophetic discernment of the future mischiefs and their causes, he additionally prayed, that the most virtuous and upright persons should be put about the king; that the expenditure of his household should be confined to his revenues; that the supplies which were granted for the war, should be faithfully applied to it; and that laws made in parliament, should be rescinded only by parliament<sup>6</sup>. They were answered from the throne, That it was too hard a request to put any

<sup>4</sup> Plac. Parl. vol. 3. pp. 3—7. It contained the assertion of a principle, as to the royal succession, now happily legal, while the three estates in parliament continue the dynasty, but then too new to be completely settled, and which indeed was violated in this very reign. "The king is your natural and rightful liege lord, as it is said, not by

election or by other such collateral way, but by right succession of inheritance." *Ib* p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> The Speaker here mentioned is presumed to have been the first speaker of the house of commons. This point will be considered in the chapter on the constitution.

<sup>6</sup> Plac. Parl. pp. 5, 6.

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III.  
REIGN OF  
RICHARD II.

any others about the king than those whom he liked, or to remove any, without defaults arraigned and proved; but that the knights and esquires about the sovereign should be prohibited from asking him for any gifts. It was declared, that the officers of the household should be spoken to on the expences; and that the wishes of parliament on the war-supplies should be duly attended to<sup>7</sup>. A grant of two tenths and fifteenths was then made, to support the continuing war with France; several noblemen were appointed, with the king's uncles, to be regents during his minority<sup>8</sup>; and as the commons had requested that some persons might be named treasurers or guardians of the money they had voted, to see that it was applied to the expences of the war, and not to any other object, two merchants of London, Walworth and Philip, were nominated for that purpose<sup>9</sup>. The duke of Lancaster, dissatisfied with the conduct of the court and parliament, and feeling his own unpopularity, withdrew to his castle at Killingworth<sup>10</sup>.

French war  
continues.

The French would grant no peace but on their own terms<sup>11</sup>; and their fleet, taking advantage of a temporary naval superiority on their part, and of inactivity in the English administration, committed many ravages on the English coast, took the Isle of Wight, burnt Hastings, plundered Rottingdean, and attacked Winchelsea, where an abbot stoutly resisted them<sup>12</sup>, other lords having

<sup>7</sup> Plac. Parl. p. 7.—The clergy also petitioned, that the king would have in his presence, councils, and service, “prodes homines,” ib. p. 14, as if he had already been surrounded by unworthy favourites.

<sup>8</sup> The commons had petitioned, that the king's council might be enlarged. Ib. p. 6.

<sup>9</sup> Ib. p. 7. — The house of commons, before it separated, attacked the late king's mistress, Alice Peers. She was charged with obtaining the king's consent and interference

against the opinion of his council. Proofs were adduced, and she was ordered to be banished.

<sup>10</sup> Wals. Hist. p. 196.

<sup>11</sup> Mon. Evesh. Rich. II. p. 2.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. pp. 2, 3. Walsing. pp. 197, 198. It was a strange rumour to spread, that a captured Frenchman had said, that if the English had made the duke of Lancaster their king, their coasts would not have been so infested by the French. Ib. p. 3. If such ideas.



having failed<sup>13</sup>. The duke of Lancaster at last assumed the command of the fleet, to protect the coasts. The English government engaged their nation to assist the duke of Bretagne against the king of France, and Lancaster made some efforts for this purpose; but their political purposes were ultimately disappointed, by the duke entering into a treaty with his feudal lord<sup>14</sup>. Another war was undertaken, to assist Portugal against Castile; and the duke of Cambridge, one of the king's uncles, was sent with an army to operate. Lancaster's private interest was suspected to be the real cause of the expedition, though public objects were made the ostensible pretexts<sup>15</sup>. These wars, and the taxations which they made indispensable, led to insurrections that convulsed the kingdom.

The bishop of Rochester, in his sermon after the coronation, had accompanied his admonitions to the great, to cultivate mutual amity and private virtue, with exhortations "that they would not causelessly burthen the people with such great taxations<sup>16</sup>." He had observed the pecuniary pressures of the preceding reign, and he anticipated the dangers of their repetition or augmentation. In the second year's parliament, the chancellor stated, that we had then many fine and noble entrances into France; by which we could distress her, Cherburgh, Brest, Calais, Bourdeaux, and Bayonne; and that these required but a small sum to keep. The commons objected to granting money for foreign fortresses. They were answered, that these were "the barbicans of the kingdom

Pecuniary  
exigencies of  
government.

ideas were afloat, it is probable that the archbishop's assertion of the right of succession by strict inheritance, was aimed at the partisans or pretensions of this powerful duke.

<sup>13</sup> As the king's uncle of Buckingham, and  
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lord Latimer; Mon. Ev. p. 4; also earls of Arundel and Salisbury, p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> Monk of Evesham, 7. 17. 19. Froiss. Wals. 238. 247. 251.

<sup>15</sup> Mon. Ev. p. 22. Wals. 257.

<sup>16</sup> Wals. 196.

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kingdom of England <sup>17</sup>." They yielded to the reasoning, and they gave supplies. In 1379, the chancellor met them again with the same pecuniary urgencies: he said, that nothing could be done without charging the community; that this charge could not be made without parliament; that a naval armament was necessary; that government had borrowed all the money it could get, and had even pledged the crown jewels, and that further supplies were wanted. The commons having had nine persons appointed to examine into the state of the king and kingdom, voted a taxation <sup>18</sup>.

At the next meeting of the two houses, the same topics were renewed. The chancellor reminded them, that France, Spain, and Scotland, were enemies; and that Calais, Brest, and Cherburgh, could not be kept without expence. The commons answered, that if their liege lord had been well and reasonably governed in his expences, he would not have wanted to have taxed his poor commons. They desired that the lords of the permanent council should be dismissed, and no such counsellors retained, as the king was now "of good discretion, handsome stature, and of the same age at which his grandfather had been crowned." They requested, that commissioners should be appointed to examine the royal household and expenditure; and that if faults were found, they might be certified to the king to be amended, and that he might be honourably governed <sup>19</sup>. Supplies were then granted, but were still so inadequate to the profusion or necessities of the government, that soon afterwards, in Richard's fourth year, the parliament was again assembled to hear the chancellor declare, that the wages of the soldiers at Calais, Brest, and Cherburgh, were a quarter and an half in arrear; that the castles were in danger, because

<sup>17</sup> Plac. Parl. 34, 35.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. 56, 57.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. 71—73.



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because their garrisons talked of leaving them as they were not paid; that the king was "outrageously" indebted, and was at great expence to guard the sea. The house required a statement of *the whole* of what he wanted. Lists were made out to the amount of 160,000*l.* The commons declared the sum to be "moult outrageous and importable." The lords advised a poll-tax to be imposed; and the commons, after soliciting the clergy to supply 50,000*l.* concurred in enacting the requisite taxation<sup>20</sup>. By this capitation, or poll-tax, the great were required to pay large sums<sup>21</sup>. The aldermen and merchants were assessed on a diminished scale<sup>22</sup>; and every married person was taxed at fourpence for himself and his wife; and the unmarried, of the age of sixteen and upwards, at the same sum for each individual<sup>23</sup>.

This taxation was imposed and endured without any visible dissatisfaction. But in the next year more money was found to be wanted, and another poll-tax was enacted, of three groats, or twelve-pence, on each person, male and female, of every condition, that had passed the age of fifteen years<sup>24</sup>. To the surprise of the court, this produced less to the exchequer than the preceding assessment. The ministers imputed the deficiency to a negligent collection; and four persons, proffering their services, obtained from the king a commission to inquire into the correctness of the payment in Kent, Norfolk, and their vicinity. Their objects and imposed duty were to make a rigorous exaction of the tax; a large reward was to requite their industry, and they were convinced

The new  
poll-tax:

<sup>20</sup> Plac. Parl. 88—90.

<sup>21</sup> As, dukes, £.6. 13. 4.; earls and countesses, £.4.; barons, bannerets, baronesses and knights, £.2.; bachelors, esquires, and their widows, £.1.; the judges, £.5.; the serjeants, £.2. Plac. Parl. vol. 3. p. 57.

<sup>22</sup> The mayor of London, £.4.; the alder-

men, £.2.; other mayors, £.2.; merchants, 13*s.* 4*d.*; smaller tradesmen, according to their property, from 6*s.* 8*d.* to 6*d.* Ib. 58.

<sup>23</sup> Ib. p. 58.

<sup>24</sup> See the record of it in Plac. Parl. vol. 3. p. 90.

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Its oppres-  
sive collec-  
tion.

vinced that government would not be too nice in scrutinizing their means, if their accounts were ample<sup>25</sup>.

With this license for oppression, and with this temptation to rapacity, they began their inquisition. As the age of fifteen was the limit of personal liability, they made the exemption a fruitful instrument of extortion; for, denying that any maiden they saw was under the prescribed age, they insisted on an indecent and abominable inspection of her person to ascertain the fact. Most parents paid the tax unjustly, in order to screen their daughters from such ruffian examination; and the people became generally indignant at the manifest iniquity<sup>26</sup>. This danger was obviously produced by government having departed from the indispensable policy, of never aggravating the unpopularity of a tax by a severe and inquisitorial collection. What is paid willingly is received safely; but when rigour begins on the one side, and resentment on the other, the consequences are always incalculable, and often calamitous.

Disturbances  
caused by it;

The displeasure of the nation at the rigour and insults committed by the financial officers was universal; but the particular causes of the explosion appear to have been local and individual. The conduct of the collectors towards the young women excited the commons of Kent. They conferred together on the oppression and on the remedy, "but found no beginning hand." At last, at Fobbing in Essex, one Thomas, by trade a baker, began to exhort the people in his village to an actual insurrection<sup>27</sup>; associated others to his party; and each of these sending to their distant friends, the spirit spread from hamlet to hamlet, and town to town; till, in the month of May, all Kent and Essex were in rebellious commotion.

Not quelled  
by law.

Sir Robert Belknappe, the chief justice of the common pleas,  
was

<sup>25</sup> Knyghton, Hist. Angl. 2632, 2633.

<sup>26</sup> Ib.

<sup>27</sup> Ib. p. 2632.



was sent down to Essex, with a commission to try and punish the insurgents. But these chopped off the heads of the grand jury who began to find indictments, and compelled him to swear that he would hold no more such sessions; and they carried on poles the heads which they had cut off, and plundered the manor of the prior of St. John of Jerusalem. Sir Simon Burley, a favourite knight at court, went down to Gravesend to act vigorously. His determined conduct only increased the insurrection. Another justice, with a legal commission for trial of the offenders, was resisted, and compelled to fly; and the excited populace of Kent met at Dartford, without as yet any leader, exclaiming, That there were more kings than one in the nation, and that they would have none but king Richard<sup>28</sup>. There was a great spirit of revolt against the oppressions of government, but no disaffection towards their sovereign; for they compelled those they met, to swear fidelity to king Richard and the commons<sup>29</sup>.

At Dartford a man was found, Wat Tyler, whose exasperated attack on one of the collectors had given him distinction among the populace; and they precipitately made him their leader<sup>30</sup>. The exact progress of the insurrection is neither uniformly nor distinctly told; in such tumultuary movements, the alarm produced by their general effect confuses the accuracy of the subsequent recollection,

Insurrection  
under  
Wat Tyler.

<sup>28</sup> Stow has noticed these incidents, in his Annals, p. 284. The treasurer, in his speech to the next parliament, admits that the revolvers cried out, "q'ils veulloient avoir nul roi, sinon notre seigneur le roi Richard." Plac. Parl. vol. 3. p. 99.

<sup>29</sup> Wals. p. 258.

<sup>30</sup> Stow, from the Liber. St. Alban. states, that at Dartford the people were inflamed by the collector's indecently seizing a tiler's daughter. "Her mother cryed out; neighbours came running in; and her husband being at worke in the same towne, tyling of an

house, when hee heard thereof, caught his lathing staffe in his hand and ranne, reaking, home: where reasoning with his collector who made him so bold, the collector answered with stout words, and strake at the tylar, whereupon the tylar avoyding the blow, smote the collector with his lathing staffe that the braine flew out of his head, where-through great noyse arose in the streetes, and the poore peeple being glad, every one prepared to support the said John Tyler." Annals, 284.

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recollection, and precludes a discriminated detail. The most consistent facts may be selected. In May, five thousand rustics assembled out of Essex, armed with sticks, rusty swords, axes, and worn-out bows<sup>31</sup>, whose numbers rapidly increased. In Kent, a larger multitude collected, who attacked the mansion of the archbishop of Canterbury, at Maidstone, and released there John Balle, a priest, who had been imprisoned for teaching doctrines like those of Wickliffe; they compelled him to accompany them, and proposed to make him their archbishop<sup>32</sup>. From the counties around the Metropolis such numbers flocked together, that when they reached Blackheath, in their way to London, there were calculated to be one hundred thousand insurgents<sup>33</sup>. By this time they appear to have all submitted to the guidance of Wat Tyler<sup>34</sup>. To one of the king's knights who came to inquire the cause of their insurrection, they declared their wish to have an audience of their sovereign. Some counsellors advised Richard to meet them, and to persuade them to disperse. The archbishop of Canterbury, then the chancellor, and another minister, the treasurer, dissuaded the king from humouring such "shoeless ribalds"<sup>35</sup>. This epithet and hostile

<sup>31</sup> Wals. p. 258.

<sup>32</sup> Knyghton, 2633, 2634.

<sup>33</sup> Wals. p. 259. — Froissart's remark is probably true, that three parts of these people did not know what they asked or what they wanted, but followed one another like beasts. vol. 2. c. 74.

<sup>34</sup> This man's name is variously given. Stowe calls him John Tyler. Walsingham, Walter Helier vel Tyler. p. 264. Froissart, Wautre Tillier. vol. 2. c. 74. But the Parliamentary Rolls have "Wauter Tyler del countes de Kent." vol. 3. p. 175. These rolls destroy Knyghton's idea, that Wat Tyler and Jak Strawe were the same persons, for, after Wat Tyler, they add "Jakke Strawe en Essex;" thus clearly making them to be distinct leaders of two different counties.

Knyghton had said, that Wat Tyler changed his name to Jakke Strawe, p. 1636; but we must consider the Parliamentary record to be the most accurate. Hardyng's Chronicle corresponds with this record—

They asked eke Jake Strawe and Wat Tiler  
To bee made dukes of Essex and Kent.

p. 339. Ellis ed.

Walsingham, p. 308, calls Johannes Straw a presbyter, and the leader of the mob from Bury, &c.

<sup>35</sup> "Discalciatos ribaldos," Wals. 259.— We may infer the time of the commencement of these tumults, from the proclamation to adjourn the courts of judicature on account of them, which was dated 15 June 1381. Rymer Act. Fœd. vol. 7. p. 311.



hostile counsel coming to their knowledge, they swore vengeance against the prelate; and, proceeding to Southwark, they broke into the Marshalsea, and released the prisoners. As they approached London Bridge, the mayor and aldermen were about to close the city gates, but the populace within opened it, and admitted the insurgents<sup>36</sup>. Numerous and promiscuous as they were, they committed no rapine; they paid a fair price for all they wanted, and beheaded immediately such as attempted to steal. This conduct, and their assertion, that their object was to find out the betrayers of their country, and then to desist, disposed the citizens to favour them<sup>37</sup>. The court collected at the Tower; where the king, with the archbishop of Canterbury, the young earl of Derby, afterwards Henry IVth, Leg, the taxing commissioner, whose rigour had excited the storm, and about one hundred and eighty knights, encountered the furious mob. To save the lives of those who were threatened, the king agreed to confer with them at Mile End. The great body of the insurgents moved thither; and, after hearing their complaints, the king gave them a charter, declaring that every one in England should be free, and discharged from all servitude and villenage<sup>38</sup>. But the rabble who continued on Tower Hill became more outrageous when the king had left. They forced their entrance, although some of the bravest knights and archers were in the fortress; seized and beheaded the archbishop, the treasurer, and Leg the commissioner, and several others, before the king returned. With all the ferocious spirit of a mad and vindictive mob, and intoxicated with the liquors which they had found in the cellars of the city, they put the heads on lances and sticks, and proceeded to the Savoy, to attack the palace of the duke of Lancaster. They burnt this superb place and all its rich furniture, throwing into the fire one of their companions, who was pilfering  
some

<sup>36</sup> Wals. 259. Knyght. 2634.<sup>37</sup> Wals. 260.<sup>38</sup> Knyght. 2634.

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some of the valuable articles<sup>39</sup>. They alarmed and insulted the princess of Wales, whom they met coming to London<sup>40</sup>; they stroked the beards of the noblest knights with their dirty hands; they rushed into the king's private chamber, placed themselves on his bed, and displayed every where the most disgusting and insolent familiarity and disorder<sup>41</sup>. For seven days they continued in riot, pillage and drunkenness, destroying many houses, slaying many citizens, and at last beginning to attack and murder each other<sup>42</sup>.

The unexpected possession of such unresisted power gave audacity to the more atrocious. The love of crime increased from the facility of its perpetration. Cruelty began to wanton in mischief, and the most abandoned designs were meditated. One was, to destroy the king and nobles, to set fire to the metropolis, and to plunder it while burning<sup>43</sup>. Three times the king had given them the charters they asked for, but they became dissatisfied with all<sup>44</sup>. They were then required to meet him in Smithfield, and to state the additional articles which they projected.

Wat Tyler  
killed.

Their leader, Wat Tyler, demanded, that all the lawyers should be beheaded; and he is reported to have exclaimed, that in four days all the laws of England should flow from his lips. A knight was

<sup>39</sup> Knyght. 2635. Walsingham gives a full detail of all these atrocities, pp. 260—263; and see Froissart, c. 75. & c. 76. The bishop of Exeter's official letter states, that the rebels rushed on the archbishop of Canterbury in the Tower; beat and wounded him; called him a traitor; beheaded him near the Tower, carried his head through London on a spear, crying out, 'Here is the head of a traitor;' drove a nail into the brain, and placed it on London Bridge. Wilk. Conc. vol. 3. p. 153.

<sup>40</sup> Froissart, vol. 2. c. 74.

<sup>41</sup> Wals. 261.

<sup>42</sup> Knyght. 2635, 2636. In the city they

killed many Flemish merchants; which Chaucer notices,

Certes he Jakke Strawe, and his meinie  
Ne maden never shoutes half so shrille  
Whan that they wolden any Fleming kille.  
The Nonnes Preestes Tale, p. 131.

<sup>43</sup> Wals. 264.

<sup>44</sup> One of these charters may be inserted, to shew what the rioters at first required: "Richard, &c. greeting. Know ye, that of our especial grace, we have manumitted all liegemen and every one of our subjects, and others of the county of Hertford, and have discharged both them and theirs of all bondage, and pardon them all felonies, treasons, transgressions, extortions, &c." Wals. 266.



was sent to him by the king, and he chose to be offended that the royal messenger approached him on horseback. He drew his dagger, and was menacing an assault; when the king, to avert the danger of his friend, ordered him to dismount, and to give the weapon, which he had unsheathed, to the rebel<sup>45</sup>. Wat Tyler now addressed the king with a threatening insolence, throwing up his dagger from one hand, and catching it with the other, as if playing with it like a child, but watching, it was thought, a certain moment to stab the king, if his demands should be refused. These were, that all the warrens, streams, parks and woods, should be common to every one, and that the right of pursuing game should be equally free. As the king was pausing on such a grant, which, though he might concede, he had not the power to effectuate, Wat suddenly seized the bridle of his horse. Walworth, the mayor of London, who was near him, fearing for his sovereign's life, instinctively seized a basillard, and darted it into the rebel's throat. At the same moment, another esquire plunged one into his side. He fell on his face, sprang up once or twice on his hands and feet convulsively, and expired<sup>46</sup>. The cry immediately arose among his followers, that their leader was dead, and a thousand arrows were stretched on their bows to avenge him. The king, with hereditary courage, and with a presence of mind beyond his years, immediately rode around them, exclaiming, "Why this clamour, my liege men? What are ye doing? Will you kill your king? Be not displeased for the death of a traitor and a scoundrel. I will be your captain and your leader: follow me to the fields, and I will grant all you can ask." Pleased with his confidence and gracious manner, interested by his beautiful countenance, and as yet undetermined whether to revenge their chief, or take the king's concessions, they followed the

<sup>45</sup> Wals. 264, 265.—Gower thus describes Wat Tyler, "*Vox fera, trux vultus, verissima mortis imago.*" MS. Tib. A 4.

<sup>46</sup> Knyghton, 2636, 2637.

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the movement of those who went after the king to the fields ; thus affording an opportunity, while they were out of the city, for the friends of order and loyalty to assemble, without any apprehension of the metropolis being destroyed in the conflict. While the king was parleying with them in the fields, the mayor collected an armed force of above a thousand men. They chose sir Robert Knolles their leader, to give them disciplined array, and they rode down in military form upon the insurgents, who, seeing their shining arms and imposing appearance, and observing them moving as if to surround and charge them, became seized with a happy panic, threw down their rude arms, and fled in all directions. The knights wished to make an example of one or two hundred. But the good-natured king, pleased with the easy termination of an insurrection so menacing in its first aspect, and perhaps feeling that it was a reliance on his word which had placed them in their present situation, declared, that many had joined them through fear, who would thus be destroyed without any wilful guilt, and therefore he forbade a pursuit<sup>47</sup>.

Insurrection  
ceases.

Never was any insurrection more useless, more mischievous, or more absurd. All mob-tumults indeed are so. But this was rather violent than politically formidable. It was not the result of any conspiracy ;

<sup>47</sup> Wals. 265. With the two preceding authorities, may be read Froissart's amusing but less exact account, c. 77. On this insurrection, Gower composed his *Vox Clamantis*, a poem in Latin hexameters and pentameters. He begins it with a florid description of the summer, as the disturbance began in the month of June. He fancies himself to have dreamt, that he went into the fields to pick flowers, when he suddenly saw an innumerable crowd of monsters coming towards him, in different bodies ; some seemed changed into asinine shapes, some into cattle, some into

pigs, and others into dogs, foxes, owls, flies and frogs. As they stood collected, a Jay, that was called Watte, was chosen to be their leader. He heard their names and divers horrible voices. He states, that they had one John Halle among them, as their prophet, who instigated them to their crimes ; and that they appointed to themselves tribunes and officers. He describes their massacres and excesses, and the consternation of many, who fled to woods and caves to hide and fortify themselves. He was one of these fugitives. He took refuge in a wood, and lay hid



conspiracy; it was an ebullition of popular resentment, made universal by the inflammable state of the public mind. It proved destructive to individuals, from the suddenness of its occurrence; and its novelty struck the government with a panic, from surprise, which gave the mob their temporary and unexpected success. But the first bold resistance intimidated and dispersed the insurgents, and, being connected with no organized plan or superior leaders, the dissolution of the motley crowd terminated the danger. The tumult scarcely lasted a fortnight at London. In many parts of the country, disturbances of the same sort occurred; but they were soon suppressed<sup>48</sup>. One movement indeed, more personal and pertinacious, was directed against the duke of Lancaster, who was then in the North. Two bodies of 10,000 men went through the kingdom in search of him. All that he had at Leicester and in the castle of Tuttebury, was destroyed. His noble friends who had invited him, did not dare to receive him, and he was obliged to take shelter in Scotland<sup>49</sup>. The organization and perseverance of this part of the insurgents, may induce us to recollect his attachment

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hid there for several days, subsisting on acorns and wild herbs, and covering himself with leaves and grass:—

*Silva vetus densa, nulla violata securi,  
Absque supercilio, mihi nubis sub tegumento—  
Nulla superficies tunc quia tuta fuit.  
Per que dies aliquot latitans omnem que tremiscens,  
Ad strepitum fugi, visa pericla cavens,  
Glande famem pellens, mixta quoque frondibus herba  
Corpus ego texi, nec manus una movet—  
Tunc cibus herba fuit, tunc latis currere sylvis  
Impetus est, castra tunc quia nulla juvant.*

He narrates the death of their Jay, or Walter their captain; but still sees the vessel of the state tossed about by various winds, without a helm. He feigns, that a voice in his dream bade him write what he had seen; and this leads to a conclusion of his first book. MS. Cott. Lib. Tiberius A 4. and Titus A 13.

<sup>48</sup> Knyghton, 2637—2639. Walsingham

details the violences at St. Albans, 266—275; in Norfolk, 275; in Cambridgeshire, 277.—They seem to have raged for some time in the country before they approached the metropolis, for the Stat. 6 Rich. 2. c. 13. dates the commencement from the 1st of May, and extends them to Midsunmer day.

<sup>49</sup> Knyghton, 2639—2643.

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ment to Wickliffe, and to suspect that they were directed by persons of a different description from those who headed the tumults in the metropolis.

The crown, soon released from its apprehensions, published a proclamation, declaring it to be false, that the rebels had acted either with the king's consent, or by his orders<sup>50</sup>; revoked the charters of manumission and amnesty, which had been granted during the rebellion<sup>51</sup>; and issued a justification of the duke of Lancaster, from the calumnies with which he had been charged<sup>52</sup>. Justice Tresilian was sent into the country to try the rioters. He is described to have acted with the lawless spirit of a rioter himself; to have made a great slaughter; to have spared none, but to have hanged all who were accused, whether innocent or guilty<sup>53</sup>. The insurrection was noticed in the speech from the government, in the following parliament. The lord treasurer recommended an inquiry to be made into the causes which had produced it. He reminded them, that the king had granted letters under his great seal, enfranchising the servile part of the community, but declared, that his majesty was aware that he could not do this consistently with the law of the land, and had therefore recalled them. But he left it to the prelates, lords and commons, to decide, whether they would sanction the enfranchisement or not, adding, from the throne, this important intimation, that if they were desirous to enfranchise the servile classes, as it had been reported some were, the king would assent to the measure<sup>54</sup>. The lords and commons did not adopt the liberal feeling of the sovereign: they declared, that they would not sanction the manumissions, though

<sup>50</sup> This was dated 23 June 1361. Rymer, Act. Fœd. vol. 7. p. 316.

<sup>51</sup> Rymer, p. 317. This revocation was dated 2 July 1381: so that by the end of June the insurrection was over.

<sup>52</sup> Rymer, p. 318, dated 3 July 1381.  
"Nulli parces fecit stragam magnam."

<sup>53</sup> Knyghton, p. 2643.

<sup>54</sup> Parl. Plac. 99. The term here used for the class in bondage is "Neifs;" the same with Bracton's "Nativi," or persons born in bondage.



though they should all perish in one day ; and they annulled them universally<sup>55</sup>. But the commons petitioned for the king's grace and pardon to the rebels, which was immediately granted, with individual exceptions<sup>56</sup>.

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This strange insurrection, so new to England, and the subsequent commotions which marked this agitated reign, although the son of the favourite Black Prince was the sovereign, lead us to suspect that no common agencies must have been in operation to have produced such momentous results. The conduct of the tax assessors and collectors will account for local and transient effervescence, but not for the extensive discontent, continued factions, and ultimate revolution, which disturbed the kingdom at this period<sup>57</sup>.

Causes of  
the public  
agitation.

We may distinguish the causes of these evils into three classes : Those, which were the consequences of the warlike system of Edward III. ; those, which were the results of the improving tendencies of society at that period ; and those, which occurred from the personal character of the king.

By his wars in France, Edward III. had occupied the chivalry of his country in expeditions, which expended abroad that martial spirit which might have been troublesome at home ; and by the two great victories of Cressy and Poitiers, an intellectual impression had been made on the contending countries, and on Europe at large, highly to the credit of the English people. The superiority of

1<sup>st</sup>, Conse-  
quences of  
the preced-  
ing wars of  
Edward III.

<sup>55</sup> Plac. Parl. 100. Accordingly, by the Stat. 5 Rich. 2. c. 7. all such "manumissions, obligations, relesse et d'autres liens," were made void ; and it was made treason to begin "riot et rumour." This latter part was repealed by 1 Edw. 6. c. 12.

<sup>56</sup> Plac. Parl. pp. 103 & 111. Seventeen persons were excepted in Norfolk ; twenty in Suffolk ; four in Cambridgeshire ; eleven in Essex ; four in Hertfordshire ; twenty-three in Middlesex ; eight in Winchester ; twenty in Kent ; eight in Sussex ; thirteen in Somers-

set ; eight in Canterbury ; and one hundred and fifty-one in London. Ib. pp. 111—113.

<sup>57</sup> That Gower considered the disturbances to have much deeper seated causes than the mere taxation, is evident, from his *Vox Clamantis*. He expresses great apprehension of exciting much odium by his representations, and of their occasioning much angry criticism on himself ; but he resolves to attempt the task, and to write only truth. See the third book of his *Vox Clamantis*.

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of their individual prowess had been proved, and the celebrity of the nation had been widely diffused. The French armies, as men, were decided to be inferior to the English in military exercises, in persevering resolution, and in personal strength, as their leaders were at this juncture in tactical skill. From the experience of these facts, England was taught its intrinsic national greatness, and was freed from all doubt of the ability to preserve its national independence. When we consider the individual security and spirit, the general honour and magnanimity, and the internal improvements and activity, which flow from such a conviction and such a truth, we cannot, even as philanthropists, regret the wars which first decisively established them. But these wars, like all great events, were followed by many consequences; and some of these were disadvantageous to the future sovereign.

Among these we may consider the creation of feelings on both of the contending nations, which ensured the recurrence of future hostilities. Mortified pride, a desire of revenge, and a resolution to regain the territory they had lost, and to retrieve their national reputation, became the future actuating principles of the French government and people; and hence the peace which they made, was but an armed truce with a more specious title. In the English mind, an elevated self opinion, a love of martial glory, an insulting contempt for the enemies they had vanquished, a confidence that they should always conquer, a passion to repeat their triumphs; and a wish, allied to more sordid feelings, to renew the invasion, that they might share again the spoils of a beaten country; produced a fondness and an eagerness for war, which, craving the occurrence, cared little for the cause. With this sufficiency of hostile motives on both sides, it is no wonder that a renewed war was still raging when the reign of Edward III. closed. He was not allowed to repose on the laurels he had won: and as the honours of war



war are at all times the most evanescent and mutable, depending sometimes on the comparative talents of the opposing leaders; sometimes on numerical force; sometimes on the nature of the country, and often on the accidents of disease, want of supplies, failure of co-operation, or other casualties which mock both skill and valour; it was consistent with the usual experience of human affairs, that, glorious as the summer-day of Edward III. had shone, the autumn of his life should be clouded, like that of most great warriors, with disappointment, humiliation, and defeat. Dying in the midst of new hostilities, he left his grandson Richard II. to inherit his wars with this change of fortune, and to begin his reign with two circumstances inauspicious to its felicity.—French fleets insulting the coasts, and ravaging the towns of England; and the necessity of obtaining annual and burthensome supplies from his people, to repel these unpopular hostilities. Both these events disposed the nation to eye the measures of government, from its very commencement, with jealousy and reproach.

The beginning of Richard's reign, thus unpopular, it became more so when factious partisans excited the treasonable question, Whether the duke of Lancaster would not have been a more effective sovereign? His own failures in the conduct of the war, at length lessened the effect of these discussions. But more dangerous feelings spread at the picture which men drew of this reign, contrasted with the preceding. A reign of great martial glory inevitably casts over the next a deep shade, and gives even to peace a disgrace which is both unjust and unfounded. We have the ebullitions of the popular reasoning or prejudices on this subject, recorded by the contemporary pen of Froissart<sup>58</sup>. And we find from

<sup>58</sup> Froissart mentions, that there were many murmurs in England, in various places; and some said, who were thinking of evil rather than of good; "What have become of the great enterprises, and the valiant men of England, of Edward the Third, and his son the

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from him, that the money-levies made on the people, and their application, were equally censured<sup>59</sup>.

Another consequence of the anterior warfare, was the diffusion through the country of the disbanded or unemployed soldiery, which had been raised for preceding campaigns; to whom, though no longer effective from age and service, inactivity was misery, and whose peaceful life was comparatively a state of penury and neglect. Our old poet Occleve, who lived at this time, has left us some complaining stanzas on the neglect and poverty of the veterans whom Edward had used; which lead us to the conviction that these were among the exciting instruments of disaffection<sup>60</sup>. We find, indeed,

the prince? We used then to go into France and overthrow our enemies; so that none dared to array themselves in battle against us, or if they attempted it, were discomfited. In those days, Englishmen were dreaded. All the world talked of us, and of our noble chivalry. Now they may be silent upon it,

for we know nothing of warring at present, except to steal purses from wealthy people: at this we are very apt." vol. 3. c. 63.

<sup>59</sup> "Where go all our revenues, so large and so numerous, raised by taxation, in addition to the king's customary income? They must be either squandered or embezzled." Froiss. ib.

<sup>60</sup> O fikell world! alas! thy variance!

How many a gentilman may men now see,  
That whilom in the werres olde of France  
Honored were, and holde in grete chiertee,  
For her prowesse in armes and plentie  
Of frendes hade in youthe, and now for shame—  
Alas! her frenship is croked and lame.

Now age, unorne, away putteth favour,  
That floury youth in his ceson conquered.  
Now forgete is al maner manly labour  
Thurgh whiche full ofte thei her foes assered.  
Now ben the worthy men beten with the yerd  
Of nede. Alas! and none hath of heni routhe.  
Pitee is beried, I trowe be my trouthe.

After calling on the young men to help the old, needy warriors, he adds,

Knyghthode, awake! thou slepest to long.  
Thy brother, see, ny dieth for mischief.  
Awake! and rewe upon his peynes strong.  
Yf thou hereafter come unto suche myschief,  
Thou wilt full sore thirst after relief.  
Thou art not sure what shall thee befall.  
Welthe is foul slepir, beware, lest thou fall.

Occleve. MS. Bib. Reg. 17 D 6



indeed, this topic of discontent even mentioned in parliament itself at the very beginning of this reign<sup>61</sup>.

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It is perhaps to these superfluous and dissatisfied warriors, that we must attribute some of those grievous violences, which were in fact petty insurrections, which accompanied the king's accession, and were repeatedly the subject of complaint, and of the legislation of parliament. In the second year of his reign, the chancellor stated, that many persons collected in great multitudes, in arms, and violently dispossessed others of their lands, ill treated women, and slew unoffending people<sup>62</sup>. The house of commons also complained, about the same time, that many in Cheshire, Lancashire, and the adjoining counties, went about committing homicides, took prisoners those who could pay the ransom they exacted, and rode in armed array to fairs, to plunder the attending merchants<sup>63</sup>. So general was this evil, that an ordinance was passed, empowering the crown to arrest all malefactors; although the commons soon afterwards requested a repeal of this strong law, because it was found to become oppressive to liberty<sup>64</sup>.

With these materials of disturbance, and with these subjects for popular ill-humour, the first years of this reign passed gloomily on; while other causes of a feverish action were gathering strength, which even the improvements of the country contributed to produce. From the common progress of human affairs, it must happen that at different periods of the world, the leading minds, or the larger mass of society, acquire feelings and ideas either more improved.

II<sup>nd</sup>, Improving tendencies of the nation.

<sup>61</sup> That the chivalry of the kingdom had been rebuquiz et tenuz en vilettee, and put behind, and vice advanced. Plac. Parl. vol. 3. p. 5.

<sup>62</sup> Plac. Parl. vol. 3. p. 33.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. p. 42.—So the Parliamentary Record in the 8th year of Richard, states, that "many people come from the county of Chester into Shropshire, and into the counties

of Stafford, Worcester, Gloucester, Hereford, Lancaster, Nottingham, Derby, Warwick, Leicester, and York, both day and night, armed and arrayed for war, and kill the inhabitants; burn houses; violate women; maim and beat individuals, and kill and take their goods and cattle." Plac. Parl. p. 201.

<sup>64</sup> Plac. Parl. p. 65.

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improved than those of their ancestors, or at least dissimilar. Human life exhibits a continual flux of changing parts. The minds and habits of mankind are not more stationary than their persons; for although the alterations, having to spread from individual to individual, and being imbibed with varying degrees of readiness or quantity, are not visible in their mass, but at certain intervals of time, sometimes remote from each other, yet their ultimate agency is certain, and the collisions which they produce are as disquieting as incalculable. There is perhaps no way to avert their danger, but to prevent the explosion by a foreseeing and timely reformation, or modification of existing laws or habits.

From the benevolent practice of emancipating some of their enslaved tenantry and domestics, which had long prevailed among the great; from the constant encouragement of their freedom by the crown, the church, and the law, all agreeing upon its national benefit; from the superior prosperity and fertility of those who enjoyed the blessings of individual liberty; and from the numerous casualties of the knights and barons in their wars and crusades, which frequently left many estates without owners, and therefore many bondmen without masters; the number of the free population had never ceased to increase: and England, besides her ancient cities, had become full of burghs and towns, inhabited by free persons, many of whom, from the acquisition of wealth by trade, were also purchasers of land. It was the tendency of this state of things that personal servitude should become generally odious. It had long been much alleviated; and in the reign we are delineating, the servile bondage of our rustic population had become for the most part reduced to tilling their lord's land, reaping, housing, and thrashing his corn, and cutting and carrying for him wood for fuel<sup>65</sup>. But that these labours should be  
exacted

<sup>65</sup> Froissart, vol. 2. c. 74.



exacted gratuitously from poor husbandmen by their wealthy superiors, was so repugnant to the pride and justice of human nature; and that one man should be at all the slave of another, was so revolting to the spirit of the brave and prosperous, now beginning to enjoy the blessings of diffusing reason and liberty; that a desire arose, not only in England, but in France<sup>66</sup>, at this period, of terminating all vassal bondage. The system of paying a fixed rent instead of performing personal servitude, had not then become popular, nor duly appreciated in its political consequences; and therefore the minds of the great, and of their vassal tenantry, were in a state of mutual dissatisfaction and latent warfare on this important subject; the aristocracy considering the vassal subjection of their peasantry as their legal right, both of property and power, and as one great mean of political influence; and the people universally desirous to have personal slavery wholly abolished.

The national mind was also rapidly falling into a revolutionary state, with respect to the hierarchy. The wealth, luxury, ambition, and corruptions of all classes of the clergy, had long excited public censure and odium. The new orders increased, by their satire and rivalry, the unpopularity of the old ecclesiastical dignitaries; and the diffusion of the new opinions which Wickliffe so energetically applied himself to spread, occasioned a great number, both of the nobility and the courtiers, as well as of the merchants and the more thinking part of the common people, to desire a diminution of the power and property of the ecclesiastical bodies, and the change of many of their doctrines, institutions, and ceremonies. It was not likely that a hierarchy, so rich and potent as the English Catholic hierarchy then was, should see this rising hostility with indifference.

<sup>66</sup> Froissart has noticed the insurrection of the vassal peasantry in France about this time, who, from the real or assumed name

of their leader, was called Les Jacques Bons homs. vol. 2. c. 74.

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indifference. They were as resolved to defend, as the reformers were desirous to attack; and the collision between these two great parties was every day approaching to an explosion. The intellectual improvements of the day, which were perpetually multiplying themselves both in amount and diffusion, increased the number of those who craved a melioration of the ecclesiastical system, and gave the vassal peasantry reasoning advocates, whose opinions turned the feelings of society in their favour.

The duke of Lancaster had publicly espoused the cause of Wickliffe, and of clerical reformation. This conduct fixed upon him the enmity of the existing hierarchy. The defects of his character, in which neither pride nor ambition were wanting, gave them sufficient grounds to make him unpopular; and his desire to obtain or share the regency, during the royal minority, favoured their wishes. When the poll-tax, and the conduct of its collectors, had roused the resentment of the populace, all these political causes of effervescence began to operate through the nation with furious rapidity. All the latent spirit of discontent and desire of change, and all the new speculations, and their resisting forces, burst into action. The vassal peasantry thought the hour was come to end their bondage; the religious reformer, to make the improvements he wished; and the expectant plunderers of church property, to have the pillage they meditated<sup>67</sup>: while the more foreseeing defenders of the hierarchy also saw that the tumultary movement gave them an opportunity of being revenged on their great enemies; of directing on them some part of the popular

<sup>67</sup> Walsingham expressly charges the commons as aiming at the temporalities of the clergy, p. 348. He says, "I heard one knight intensely swearing, that he would have 1000 marks yearly from St. Alban's monas-

tery. Ib.—The pasquinade imputed to Chaucer; called Jacke Upland, and Piers Plouhman's works, will shew the reforming feeling in the nation, as to the clergy.



popular commotion; and of extinguishing all projects of reform, in the dread and in the calamities of rabble licentiousness and extravagant speculation<sup>68</sup>. The recollection of all these moving forces and opposing schemes, will enable us to understand the multifarious and dissimilar operations of the extraordinary insurrection which we have described, so new to English history, and apparently so incoherent in its objects and effects. They will also prepare us to expect that the rest of this reign should not be tranquil.

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The king's personal character increased the evils of the day. Like the unfortunate Edward II. and untaught by his catastrophe, Richard II. became fond of favourites. He was popularly satirized for his young ministers, and for one of them, who was called "his doll," and of whom it was said, "he has seen nothing, he has learnt nothing, and never been in battle<sup>69</sup>." This inexperienced favourite became the chief counsellor of the king, and was created duke of Ireland. The nobility were offended at his influence: they exclaimed, that he made the king what he pleased<sup>70</sup>. They recollected and circulated disgraceful anecdotes of his father<sup>71</sup>. They declared the king to be counselled by evil, low-born people, and that he could not prosper with such an administration.

III<sup>rd</sup> Cause;  
defects of  
the king's  
character.

That Richard was defective in his personal conduct, we may also infer from the strong and repeated exclamations of our ancient poet Gower, written at the time, and before the Lancastrian question arose. Vice and tyranny are the imputations conveyed in his

<sup>68</sup> Some carried, even at this period, their theories so far as to ask,

When Adam delved, and Eve span,  
Where was then the gentleman?

<sup>69</sup> Froissart, vol. 3. c. 63.

<sup>70</sup> Id. vol. 9. c. 77.

<sup>71</sup> Froissart details these at some length, c. 77.—The king made this favourite *Marquis* of Dublin, being the first that bore this dignity in England.—Walsingham remarks the indecent familiarity with which the king was reported to love him. p. 352.

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his English verse<sup>72</sup>; and his unpublished Latin poem, written while the king was young, abounds with intimations of the royal vices, and with exhortations to a different conduct, which imply them<sup>73</sup>. He urges him to avoid the contaminating company of the depraved<sup>74</sup>; to drive the vicious immediately from him<sup>75</sup>; to avoid what ruined Solomon<sup>76</sup>; to be virtuous as well as handsome<sup>77</sup>; to remember, that neither beauty nor noble ancestors would profit, if he became a slave to vice<sup>78</sup>; to impose a bridle on himself, while he restrained others by laws<sup>79</sup>; and if he wished to be a king, to govern first himself, and then he would be truly so<sup>80</sup>. He

exhorts

<sup>72</sup> In his *Confessio Amantis* he urges Richard  
- - - That he hymselfe amende  
Towarde his God and leve vice—  
and to

Governe and lede in such a wise  
So that there be no tyrannise,—  
Wherof that he his people grieve;  
Or elles maie he nought achieve,

That longeth to his regalie.  
For if a kynge will justifie  
His londe and hem that ben within  
First at hymselfe he mot begin.

Gower's *Confessio Amantis*,  
Chal. ed.

<sup>73</sup> Thus he says, - - - O bone rex juvenis—

Ille rex noster qui *modo* in sua puerili constituitur ætate.

Vox Clam. MS. Tib. A 4.

It is a mistake to date this work at the end of Richard's reign: the lines that have occasioned this error, belong to a different Latin poem of Gower's.

<sup>74</sup> Plaude bonis; fuge pravorum consilia—

<sup>75</sup> Rex! igitur citius viciosos pelle remotos—

<sup>76</sup> O pie rex juvenis! juvenili quid Salomoni  
Contigit, vitare sis memor unde hic—

<sup>77</sup> O Rex - - - -  
Nobile corpus habes et singula membra decora;  
Sit virtus animi; sit magis illa tibi—

<sup>78</sup> Quid tibi forma juvat, vel nobile nomen avorum,  
Si viciis servus factus es ipse tuus—

<sup>79</sup> Legum frena tenens, freno te fortius arce—

<sup>80</sup> Si rex esse velis, te rege, rex et eris—

Walsingham gives an instance of the king's passionate temper. For some light causes he burst into such a rage against the archbishop of Canterbury, that he ordered his goods to be confiscated. His favourite chancellor could scarcely prevent the wild measure. The king poured out "*verba contumeliosa*" on both; which, the Chronicler says, it would be too long to write, and were unbecoming the king's station. All who interfered had their share both of the anger and the abuse. Hist. p. 342.—His wrathful dialogue with the duke of Lancaster, in Scotland, seems another instance of an ungovernable and unwise irascibility. Wals. p. 34.



exhorts him to shut his ears to bad counsellors, lest his offended nobles should be roused ; he warns him of the danger of imposing taxes, and intimates that some avaricious counsellor was misleading him, whom he ought to shun like death<sup>81</sup>. Another dangerous principle in the royal mind was a passionate and arbitrary self-will. He was too young not to rush to his wished object by the shortest road, neither foreseeing nor comprehending the obstacles that would have made a wiser man hesitate.

The taste of Richard for personal splendour and luxurious magnificence, embarrassed his finances and corrupted his people. Ten thousand followers were every day feasted in his household ; three hundred servants waited in his kitchen ; and every office was proportionably loaded with attendants<sup>82</sup>. Their dresses appear to have been ostentatiously superb<sup>83</sup>, exceeding in costliness what courtly grandeur

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<sup>81</sup> Vir qui bella movet, qui predas consulit et qui  
Conspirat *taxas* plebis habere tuæ ;  
O rex, oro tuas claudas talibus aures  
Ne tua nobilitas læta fatiscat eis.  
Consilium regale tuum vir nullus avarus  
Tangat, sed tales mortis ad instar habe—

Vox. Clam. MS. Tib. A 4.

<sup>82</sup> We learn this from Hardyng—

Truly I herd Robert Ireliffe say,  
Clerke of the grene cloth, that to the household  
Came every daye, for moost partie alwaye,  
Ten thousand folke by his mess is tould,  
That folowed the hous, aye as thei would,  
And in the kechin three hundred servitours  
And in eche office many occupiours.

Hard. Chron. p. 346.

<sup>83</sup> Yemmenne and gromes in cloth of silke arayed,  
Sattyn, and damiaske, in dublettes and gounes,  
In cloth of grene and scarlet for unpayed,  
Cut werke was greate both in court and tounes,  
Bothe in mennes hoddis and also in their gounes ;  
Broudur and furies and goldsmith werke aye newe,  
In many a wise eche daye thei did renewe.

Hard. Chron. 347.

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grandeur had been accustomed to exhibit<sup>84</sup>. The consequences of this taste were, heavy taxations on his people, which excited their hatred; and a dissoluteness of manners<sup>85</sup>, which always produces factions and disloyalty. Both these facts are so distinctly recorded of this reign, that their operation is unquestionable. Nor is it difficult to trace the causes to their effects. From the increasing wealth of the country, it is probable that there was nothing in the taxations, considered by themselves, which the people, if they had been good-humoured with their government, or as economical as their ancestors, might not have endured with ease and cheerfulness; and yet, although better able, they were less disposed to bear them. It would seem that the expensive pomps and luxury of the sovereign produced an imitating taste and spirit among his subjects; and these new habits put all to their full stretch of means. It was not every one who could support the taxations levied for the wants of the state, and also the style of living and personal appearance which were necessary to those who wished to live with that distinction in society which in a civilized age is so generally

<sup>84</sup> And ladies faire with their gentilwomen,  
Chamberers also and lavenders,  
Three hundred of them were occupied then.  
Ther was greate pride among the officers,  
And of al menne farpassyng their compeers,  
Of riche araye, and mucche more costious  
Then was before or sith and more precious.

Hard. Chron. 347.

<sup>85</sup> Greate lechery and fornicacion  
Was in that house, and also greate advoutree,  
Of paramoures was greate consolacion,  
Of eche degre well more of prelacie,  
Then of the temporall er of the chivalrie.  
Greate taxe ay the Kyng tooke through all the lond,  
For whiche the Commons hym hated both free and bond.

Hard. Chron. 347.



generally coveted<sup>86</sup>. Hence the clamours of many, whose patriotism was inferior to their pride. The luxury of the great, when it has become the fashion of the day, tends also to engender a rapacious and unprincipled spirit amongst themselves, and in the country,

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<sup>86</sup> Occleve has left us some stanzas, complaining of the emulous prodigality of his contemporaries at this period, and especially of their dress, on which they spent their whole property.

But thys methynketh a grete abusion;  
To see one walke in gownes of scarlet  
Twelve yerdes wide, with pendaunt sleeves doun  
On the ground, and the furre therin set  
Amountyng unto twenty pound, and bet.  
And, yf he for it paide have, he no good  
Hath hym lefte, to bey with an hood.

Nor though he yode forthe amonge the prees,  
And overloke every poore wight;  
His coffre and eke his purs ben penylees.  
He hath no more than he goth in ryght.  
For land, rent or catel he may go light.  
The weight of hem shall not so much peise  
As doth his goune. Is such aray to preise?

Nay done it is all mys me thynketh;  
So poore a wight his lord to countirfete  
In his aray; In my conceyt it stynketh.  
Certes to blame ben the lordes grete,  
Yf that I durste sey, that her men lete  
Usurpe such a lordes apparaile.  
It is not worth, my child, withouten faile.

Som tyme men myght aferre lordes knowe  
By her aray from other folk—but now  
A man shall studie and muse a longe throwe  
Which is which—O Lordes! it sitte to yow—  
Amende this—For it is your prowte.  
Yf betwene you and your men no defference  
Be in aray, the lesse is your reverence.

Lete every lord his owen men defende  
Suche grete aray; and than on my perile,  
This land within a while shall amende.  
In Goddes name putteth it in exile.  
It is a synne outrageous and vile.  
Lordes! yf ye your estate and honour  
Loven—Flemeth this vicious errour.

Occleve MS. Bib. Reg. 17 D 6.

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country, from which government suffers. As few individual resources suffice for habits or appetites so costly, the throne becomes besieged, and the country filled with a class of men the most dangerous to all states—individuals born to better expectations, or accustomed to foster them, and embarrassed and corrupted by ambitious expenditure. Luxury then operates to convert the vices into necessary appetites, and to make crimes, dishonesty, or faction, indispensable to the subsistence of many, who are too proud to lose their desired rank in society, and too poor to maintain it. Laws become then often but random cannon-shot, whose chances several will dare<sup>87</sup>. Secret desires of change, and even of disturbance, begin to be cherished, because the absurdest hopes place their elysium in expected novelties; and society, disordered in those who ought to be its ligaments, and pervaded by an increasing fever, is ever ready for some disastrous convulsion, which the slightest coinciding incident may suddenly produce. It was to excite the attention of the great to the political evils which the moral corruptions of the day were producing, that Gower wrote his *Vox Clamantis* in the former part of Richard's

<sup>87</sup> We have already remarked that it was a feature of the day, that plundering bands pervaded the country. Occleve complains of the great in title, but not in property, doing this.

Now in good feethe, I pray God it amende.

Law is nye flemed out of this contree.

For fewe ben that dredon it to offende

Correccion; and all this is longe on the.

Why suffrest thou so many assemble

Of armed folk? Wel nye in every shire,

Partie is made to venge her cruell ire.—

And by the grete, poore folk ben greved

For he that noble is of blode, and lord

In stile, and nought hath—stired is and moved

Unto rapyne. This is often proved.

The poore it feeleth. Thus of lawe the lak

Norriseth wrong, and casteth right abak.



Richard's reign<sup>88</sup>; and its disastrous close is some evidence, that his opinion of the importance of better habits in his sovereign, and the leading orders of the nation, was not without a reasonable foundation<sup>89</sup>.

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Accusation  
of the duke  
of Lancaster.

The intestine discord seems to have begun by the accusation, in 1384, of the duke of Lancaster. A Carmelite friar appeared at the parliament, and accused him of conspiring to kill the king, and to seize the crown. It was against his credibility that he advised the king not to hear the duke's defence. Suddenly entering, the duke was informed of the charge, and denied it, and requested the friar to be committed to the care of the lord Holland, the king's brother, till the day of trial. This was conceded; but, on the night preceding this important day, the friar was cruelly murdered by his keeper. The person whom the friar had pointed out as the inventor and incentive of the alleged treason, denied upon his oath that he had either heard or thought of it. The duke of Gloucester was reported to have vehemently upbraided the king, for listening to such an improbable charge. On the other hand, it was fabled that the hurdle on which the friar was dragged through the streets, after his death vegetated, produced

<sup>88</sup> Gower opens the second book of this Latin poem with intimating, that he intends to name it *Vox Clamantis*, because it will be made up from the voice and clamour of the public. He then devotes seven books to the description of the errors and vices of all orders of the state, which he conceived to occasion the agitation of the country. He executes this task with very strong and free satire, and with some good lines. Some passages a little resemble Juvenal, and shew the poet; but on the whole he is tedious, diffuse, and sometimes puerile. His last book is an earnest exhortation to the young king to alter his conduct. This work contains above ten

thousand lines. MS. Cott. Lib. Tiberius A 4. and Titus A 13. The first is the best written copy.

<sup>89</sup> The *Catalina* and *Jugurtha* of Sallust, and indeed the Roman history from the destruction of Carthage to Augustus, should be read by those who wish to study the connection between the moral and political disorders of civilized states, by which so many, both ancient and modern, have been agitated and destroyed. The private virtues are indispensable to the continuance of public prosperity or tranquillity.

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tion to Spain.

produced leaves, and cured a blind man<sup>90</sup>!! The mysterious affair, suspicious on all sides, seemed to pass into oblivion, and the king treated Lancaster with the same friendship as before.

The duke went to France, to treat for peace. But the next year the king allowed his ministers to plan the sudden arrest of the duke; on whom Tresilian was boldly to pronounce a judicial sentence, according to the accusation that should be preferred. Advertised of the design, the duke hastened down to his castle at Pomfret, and public disturbances seemed likely to ensue. The king's mother, though in very delicate health, was so affected by these proceedings, that she undertook the office of negotiating herself between the king and his uncle, and wearied herself by expensive and personal journeys, till she had completed their reconciliation<sup>91</sup>. Her amiable exertions had such a permanent effect, that in the succeeding spring, when Lancaster went to Spain with

<sup>90</sup> Walsingh. Hist. 334—336. — John of Holland was the brother of the king by his mother's side, but he had been named by Lancaster. Which party instigated Holland to the murder, is unknown.

<sup>91</sup> Wals. Hist. 341.—There is a strange charge on Lancaster, that he had a chronicle forged, to prove that Edward I. had an elder brother, who was postponed because he was crook-backed, and from whom Lancaster attempted to adduce a title to the crown. I give it in Hardyng's words:—"Also I herde the seide erle of Northumberlonde saie divers tymes, that he herde duke John of Lancastre, amonge the lordes in counsels and in parlementes, and in the comon house amonge the knyghtes chosyn for the comons, aske bi bill for to beene admytte heire appaunte to kyng Richarde, considerynge howe the kyng was like to haue no issue of his bodie. To the whiche the lordes spirituall and temporell, and the comons in the comon house be hoole auyse, seide, that the erle of

Marche, Roger Mortymere, was his next heire to the croun, in full discent of blode, and they wolde have noone other; and axed a question upon it, who durst disable the kyng of issue he beyng yonge and able to have children; for whiche when the duke of Lancastre was so putt bie, he and his counsell feyned and forged the seide cronycle that Edmonde shuld be the elder brother to make his son Henry a title to the croun, and wold have hade the seide erle of Northumberlonde, and sir Thomas Percy his brother, of counsaile thereof, for cause thei were discent of the seid Edmonde bi a suster; but they refused it. Whiche cronycle, so forged, the duke dide put in divers abbaies and in freres, as I herde the seid erle ofte tymes saie and recorde to divers persouns, for to be kepte for the enheritaunce of his sonne to the croun, whiche title he put furste furth, after he hade kyng Richarde in the toure, but that title the erle Percy put aside." p. 351.



with 20,000 men, in quest of the throne of Castile, the king gave him a golden crown, and the queen a similar one to his duchess; and an order was issued, that he should be called king of Spain, and receive royal honours<sup>92</sup>. The Scots continued to make incursions on the border counties; which roused the English government to several vindictive expeditions into their country, one of which the duke of Lancaster conducted<sup>93</sup>.

The threats and apparent determination of the French to invade England in 1386, spread great alarm, and appear to have begun new commotions in the country<sup>94</sup>. The attack was not made; but the unpopularity of the chancellor, Michael de la Pole, who had been created earl of Suffolk, occasioned the house of commons to impeach him on seven articles. These asserted, That the supplies granted by the commons to be expended in a certain manner, had not been so expended; by which means the sea was not guarded as had been ordered: That 10,000 marcs had been granted for the aid of the city of Ghent, and that by his fault and negligence, the city had been lost; and yet the 10,000 marcs had been paid:

That

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Impeach-  
ment of  
De la Pole.

<sup>92</sup> Knyghton Chron. p. 2676. He returned in three years from Spain, where he commuted his regal pretensions for money. Knyghton says that he was told by one of the duke's family, that the Spanish king had sent him, for his second payment, seven mules laden with chests of gold; and had also promised him 16,000 marcs a year. The duke married one of his daughters to the Spanish king, and the other to the king of Portugal. Knyght. p. 2677.

<sup>93</sup> Scotland has been remarked to be deficient in trees. A passage in Knyghton on this invasion will account for it. He says that the duke cut down the Scottish woods and burnt them. "It was reported, that 80,000 axes might be heard at once hewing down the trees, which were committed to the flames." Knyght. p. 2674. So when the

duke went and burnt Edinburgh, it is added, "and he cut down the woods and forests, and made them fuel for fire." Ib. p. 2675. No doubt the same destruction was made in other places, on this or other invasions. Walsingham says that the English army was never finer nor more numerous, but that it so desolated Scotland, that those who returned, declared that they left no birds but owls to be seen there. p. 344.

<sup>94</sup> Wals. 352. Froiss. vol. 3. p. 110—115. The French were very sanguine as to the success of this attempt, and prepared with a splendid gaiety for it. They painted their vessels with their arms; many had their masts covered with leaf-gold, as indications of their riches and power; and their banners, pennants, and streamers, were as handsome as art could make them. Froiss. p. 113.

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That contrary to his oath, he had obtained from the king lands and rents of great value; and that, to deceive the king, they were stated to be of less annual income than they were: That when nine lords were assigned to examine into the state of the king and kingdom, although he had declared in parliament that it was a measure proper to be put into execution, yet this was never done, and through his default, who was the principal officer: And that he had sealed several charters, and one on Dover, to the disinherittance of the crown, and to the subversion of the king's courts and laws<sup>95</sup>. These were charges of some importance, whatever was their justice. To the two first articles he gave no answer, but that they did not exclusively concern him, but involved the whole administration. On the next, he admitted that he had received part of such estates after he had become chancellor, but that he had taken them by way of exchange, or had received them with the grant of his dignity of earl. He asserted that he had used his diligence to execute the parliamentary ordinance. And on the article as to Dover, he owned that it had passed the seal, but he had done it inadvertently, not aware that it was contrary to law; and that if any one had informed him that it would have been prejudicial to the king or his laws, it should not have been sealed. He added, that he hoped no novelties would be practised against him, but that if a chancellor should make a patent against reason, or a judge give a judgment contrary to the law, the patent and judgment should be repealed and reversed, but without any punishment to the chancellor or judge<sup>96</sup>.

His judgment.

The commons replied; and the lords gave judgment—That as he

<sup>95</sup> The charges are in the Parl. Plac. vol. 3. p. 216. The other articles were on some transactions with one Tydeman, and the master of Saint Antoinne.—We have the popular feeling, on the loss of Ghent by his

delaying the supplies, in Knyghton, p. 2672; who adds also other charges against him, p. 2678.

<sup>96</sup> The chancellor's answers are in Parl. Plac. 216—218.



he had not observed his oath, but had, while a principal officer of the kingdom, taken from the king grants of lands and tenements, and, as he had declared that the grants had been confirmed by parliament, though there was no such record on the rolls of parliament, they adjudged that all such grants should be resumed by the king, but without loss of his title; and they annulled his illegal patents<sup>97</sup>.

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The various companies of London petitioned the same parliament for redress against the violences and oppressions of Nicholas Brambre, a confidential partisan of government in the city. They complain, that he had been appointed the lord mayor “with stronge hande” and “in destruccion of many ryght”—that he made divers armings “bi day and eke bi nyght, and destruyd the kynges trewe lyges, som with open slaughtre, som bi false imprisonment”—that “to susteyne thise wronges and many othere, he did carye grete quantitie of armure to the Guyldeshall,” and laid certain ambushes, which, when the freemen came to chuse their mayor, rushed out “armed, cryinge with loude voice, Sle! Sle! folwing hem; wherthourgh the peple, for feere, fledde to houses and other hidynges as in londe of warre adradde to be ded in commune<sup>98</sup>.”

The king is stated to have declared, that he would not remove the lowest scullion in his kitchen, to please the commons<sup>99</sup>. An unwise determination, unwisely made public. The attachment of a sovereign to an upright minister is highly laudable; it is the due reward of honest service, as honourable to bestow as to receive; without which, fidelity would lose its best encouragement, and just ambition its reasonable hope. But all the virtues have boundaries, beyond

Impeachment of the king's ministers.

<sup>97</sup> Parl. Plac. 219, 220.

<sup>98</sup> The petition of the Mercers is printed in its old English in Parl. Plac. 225. The petition of the Cordwainers is in French, p. 226. “In the same bundle are like petitions

of the Founders, the Saddlers, the Painters, the Armourers, the Pinners, the Embroiderers, and the Spurriers and Bladesmiths, of the City of London.” *Ib.* p. 227.

<sup>99</sup> Knyghton, p. 2681.

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beyond which the vices begin. Judicious firmness has a golden mean, which distinguishes it from obstinacy; and the able man carefully watches and preserves the limit. But Richard suffered his personal regard to carry him far beyond the point, where, in justice to himself as well as to the country, he ought to have paused. He thought it better that the nation should be convulsed, or at least, that the most vindictive exertions of resisting power should be hazarded, than that his favourites should be displaced, or their public influence diminished. A fatal resolution, which proved the destruction of his ministers, their opponents, and himself.

1386-7. It is painful to pursue—it is impossible to judge correctly of the events that now occurred. The chancellor was displaced. The parliament, on the grounds that by the cupidity of the royal officers the public wealth was idly consumed, the king deceived, and the people impoverished by heavy burthens; and that, while from these impositions the rents of the nobility were diminished, and the poor peasantry were abandoning the cultivation of many parts of the country, the ministers were enriched beyond measure—the parliament, believing these allegations, interfered with the executive government of the country<sup>100</sup>. They appointed fourteen lords to conduct the administration<sup>101</sup>; and the king signed a commission, investing them with the powers they were to execute<sup>102</sup>.

The chroniclers now charge the king with plotting with the duke of Ireland, Brambre, and others, to destroy the duke of Gloucester and

<sup>100</sup> Knyghton has transmitted to us these reasons, p. 2685.

<sup>101</sup> The bishop of Ely was made the chancellor, bishop of Hereford the treasurer, and John of Waltham the keeper of the privy seal. The eleven other lords were, the archbishops of Canterbury and York, the dukes of York and Gloucester, the bishops of Winchester and Exeter, the abbot of Waltham,

earl of Arundel, lord Cobham, Richard le Scrope, and John Devereux. Knyghton, p. 2685.

<sup>102</sup> See it at length in Knyghton, p. 2686, and also in the Parliament Rolls recited in the articles exhibited against the duke of Gloucester eleven years afterwards, where his agency in obtaining it was made one of his greatest crimes. Plac. Parl. vol. 3. p. 375.



and his friends, by a treacherous assassination at London<sup>103</sup>. It is difficult to believe a design so atrocious. Ireland suddenly increased the public displeasure against himself by a private immorality. He, contrary to law and without any cause, repudiated his wife, a lady of the royal blood, to marry a low-born woman in the service of the queen, who had inflamed his fancy<sup>104</sup>. This excited the indignation of Gloucester, who thought himself dishonoured in the unmerited disgrace of his kinswoman, and his public hostilities took the darker shape of individual revenge. He made no concealment of his hatred; and Ireland viewed him with equal rancour as his implacable enemy. The probability is, that each resolved on the destruction of the other<sup>105</sup>. The duke of Ireland wielded the executive sword; the duke of Gloucester headed and directed the popular indignation.

Ireland, the prelate of York, Pole, Tresilian, and others, are now described as entering into counsels to destroy their opponents. Under pretence of accompanying his favourite to his Irish government, the king went with him into Wales, but it was to settle the best plan of effectuating their fatal purposes<sup>106</sup>. From Wales they returned to Nottingham, where Brambre met them, and to which the judges were summoned. A plan, which we should now call most illegal and unconstitutional, and which no present English judge would

<sup>103</sup> The monk of Evesham says, that Brambre's plan was, that the duke and his friends should be invited to a supper at London, and there be suddenly attacked and killed; but that Exton, the lord mayor that year, would not consent to it. Mon. Ev. Vita Rich. p. 75. Wals. 353.

<sup>104</sup> Mon. Evesh. p. 84, who says, that the king favoured him even in this, because he would not have him grieved in any thing. Wals. 358; and see Froiss. vol. 3. c. 77.

<sup>105</sup> Mon. Evesh. says, that the duke of Ireland was determined to take off Gloucester,

p. 84. So Wals. 359. Froissart, vol. 3. c. 63. and c. 77. has preserved some of the popular reasonings against him; and while he repeatedly blames Ireland, he also imputes to the dukes of York and Gloucester, that they stirred up the discontents of the people; and that Gloucester urged the citizens of London to investigate the state of the finances, adding, that he and his friends would aid them. c. 77.

<sup>106</sup> Mon. Ev. 84. Wals. 359. Knyght. 2693.

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would submit to, nor could sanction, without personal dishonour, was resorted to. A set of anticipating questions was put before them, Whether the ordinances of the preceding parliament were not derogatory to the king's prerogative? How those persons were to be punished, who had procured them; and also those who had compelled the king to assent to them; and those who had hindered the king from exercising what belonged to his prerogative? Whether, after a speech from the throne to parliament, pointing out certain limited articles on which they were to proceed, if the lords and commons should go beyond these to any other matter, the king should not have the governance of parliament in this respect, and insist upon his subjects being proceeded on, without giving any answer to theirs? Whether the king could not dissolve the parliament at his pleasure? Whether the lords and commons could, without the king's will, impeach his justices or officers, for their faults in parliament? How he was to be punished, who moved in parliament for the statute to be produced, by which Edward II. was deposed? And whether the parliamentary judgment against Pole was erroneous and revocable, or not? To these questions, thus put in this extraordinary way of judicial anticipation, one of the judges objected to answer. His life was threatened if he refused; and his infirm spirit submitted to agree with the rest, only remarking as he signed, that there was nothing wanting but the gibbet and the rope to give him the fate he deserved. The compliant answers as to the penal interrogatories were, that all the acts were treason—the persons traitors—and their punishment death as traitors. The other queries were determined in favour of the king, and that Pole's judgment was revocable, as being erroneous in all its parts<sup>107</sup>. This was procuring the sentence of death against all the members of both houses of parliament, without even the pretence

<sup>107</sup> Knyghton, 2693—2696. Mon. Ev. 86.



pretence of a trial. After such a measure, we may accredit the chroniclers who state that the king and his ministers proceeded to complete their purposes by force of arms. The sheriffs were ordered to raise the posse comitatus against the barons, and to let no knight be chosen for parliament but such as the king and his counsel should chuse. The sheriffs returned, that the posse were all in favour of the nobles, and that the counties would chuse their knights as they were used to do<sup>108</sup>. The king then summoned what military bodies he could command, to attend him, and prepared for the most serious exertion of his power<sup>109</sup>.

The duke of Gloucester, anxious to appease the king, swore before the bishop of London, that he had never machinated any thing to his majesty's prejudice; though he admitted his fixed aversion to the duke of Ireland, whom he would never regard favourably, because he had dishonoured a lady allied to himself and the king. The bishop reported this solemn asseveration to his sovereign, who was rather inclined to believe it, till Pole's declamation against Gloucester renewed the king's resentment<sup>110</sup>. Both parties now became more exasperated. The king sent to arrest the earls of Arundel and Northumberland, but was disappointed<sup>111</sup>. The barons collected their friends and followers, and came to London. Various movements of the hostile forces followed. But the ministers thought the military contest to be unadvisable<sup>112</sup>. The duke of Ireland, who had been ordered by the king to collect an army from the Welsh frontier, seemed inclined to try the field with Henry of Lancaster, then earl of Derby, at Redecot Bridge, when he found that he was the only one of the nobles that had come up with

<sup>108</sup> Mon. Evesh. p. 85. Wals. 359.

<sup>109</sup> Mon. Evesh. 89. Wals. 359.

<sup>110</sup> Mon. Evesh. 89. Wals. 360.

<sup>111</sup> Mon. Ev. 90. Wals. 360. Knyghton mentions, that the ministers advised Richard

to solicit the aid of the French king, and to give him up some of the English possessions of France to procure it, p. 2697.

<sup>112</sup> Mon. Ev. 90. The archbishop wished a battle to be tried; the others overruled it.

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with him<sup>113</sup>. But his heart failed him, and he fled. Pole and he reached the continent, but Tresilian and Brambre were taken and destroyed, and several of their adherents<sup>114</sup>. Thirty-seven articles of impeachment were exhibited against the proscribed ministers, which may be considered as representing the case of the nobles against the crown<sup>115</sup>. The duke of Ireland died some years afterwards, at Louvain, in great poverty<sup>116</sup>.

On these momentous events, so contrary to good government on the one side, and to loyalty, subordination and social peace, on the other, no proper judgment can be given, as we know not the true state of the dire necessities which actuated either. The language and the feelings of the chroniclers are not favourable to the king or his ministers. The duke of Gloucester and his friends seem at this period to have discussed the question of the king's deposition. But he declares in his final confession, that he acted under a belief that his life was in danger<sup>117</sup>; and in the articles of accusation against Richard, it is expressly charged, that the king held the consultation with the judges, that he might proceed upon it to destroy the duke and his friends; and that he gave his favourite, Ireland, a secret commission to raise an armed force in Chester against them<sup>118</sup>. It is impossible now to discriminate which party was most in the wrong.

King claims  
the right of  
government.

In 1389, the king, advancing to twenty-one, suddenly inquired his age of his assembled council, and claimed the right of governing his

<sup>113</sup> Wals. 362.

<sup>114</sup> Among these, sir Simon Burley was the confidential partisan of the duke of Ireland. On his real or imputed misconduct, see Froissart, vol. 3. c. 77. pp. 205—207. W. Thorn. Chron. 2181—2185. Mon. Evesh. p. 102.—The legal charges, sixteen in number, against Burley and others, are in the Plac. Parl. vol. 3. pp. 241—243, and the judgment of parliament upon them.

<sup>115</sup> See them at length in Knyghton,

2715—2726. The whole process is more distinctly detailed in the Parliamentary Records, vol. 3. pp. 229—237. The judgment of parliament on the different articles follows in the same records, p. 237.

<sup>116</sup> Walsingham, 146; who remarks of him, that if he had received proper discipline in his early days, he would have been fit for every honourable office.

<sup>117</sup> Plac. Parl. vol. 3. p. 379.

<sup>118</sup> Ib. p. 418.



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his kingdom as he pleased, as others at his age were made competent by law to manage their own affairs. He took the great seal from the archbishop of York, put it in his bosom, and afterwards delivered it to William of Wickham<sup>119</sup>. When the parliament met, this prelate stated, that the king was of such an age that he had now greater sense and discretion than he had possessed before; an intimation strongly implying preceding imperfection;—and that he was determined to govern better, if better were possible<sup>120</sup>.

The government and the nation continued for eight years in a state of mutual dissatisfaction; and the king at one time seized the charter of the city, though he afterwards restored it. But he marked the twentieth year of his reign by an action, so personal in its mode of perpetration, and so atrocious in its nature, that it may be regarded as the real cause of his deposition. This was, the murder of his uncle, the duke of Gloucester. That the duke was highly popular; that he supported the public cause in parliament; that he had led the attack on the king's former favourites and ministers, and was considered as the bulwark of the community against the power or oppression of the government<sup>121</sup>; are circumstances declared by the English Chroniclers: That he despised his nephew for not being warlike; that he considered him to be a king who only loved repose, the luxuries of the table, and the society of ladies; that he thought England so discontented with his reign as to be desirous of a change; that he

Accusation of  
the duke of  
Gloucester.

fed

<sup>119</sup> Wals. 369.—The Life of this rich and munificent bishop has been respectably written by Lowth, a prelate who deserves immortality for his *Prælections* on the Hebrew poetry, and his admirable translation of Isaiah. It was one of the crosses of life, that a man of his mild and gentlemanly spirit, should be entangled in a controversy

with the great, but vehement, and often mistaken, Warburton.

<sup>120</sup> Plac. Parl. p. 257. Some of these transactions took place at Langley and Rodecotbrige. These places we shall find afterwards alluded to.

<sup>121</sup> See Wals. 379.

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fed the public murmurs ; and that he had at some part of his life urged the earl of March, the next heir, to take the crown, and planned to immure Richard for life ; is asserted by Froissart<sup>122</sup>. But it is important to remark, that this treasonable intention forms no part of his parliamentary accusation : this expresses, that ten years before, he had told the king that he would be in peril of his life if he did not assent to the commission of government which was then exacted ; that in the following year, he and others had assembled in arms against the king, and arrested his ministers and friends, and, among others, had caused sir Simon Burley to be executed, although the king had repeatedly refused to consent to it ; and that at the same period they had meditated, and would have accomplished, the deposition of the king, if Henry of Lancaster and the earl of Nottingham had not counteracted them ; and that they had shewn the king the record of the deposition of Edward II. and had traitorously told him, that they had sufficient cause for his removal, but that, out of respect to his noble father and grandfather, they would suffer him to continue<sup>123</sup>. These being the only charges against the duke, and being nine and ten years old, in which the king had so long acquiesced, and which he had solemnly pardoned, we may reasonably infer that no accusations more recent could be brought against him. These alleged treasons were the incidents that occurred on the struggle between the duke of Ireland's party and the nobility, and the absence of all later matter would lead us to place Froissart's conversation-piece among the garrulous defamation of the day, reviving an occurrence which belonged to a prior period<sup>124</sup>.

The

<sup>122</sup> See Froiss. vol. 4. c. 86. pp. 246—249.

<sup>123</sup> See Plac. Parl. vol. 3. pp. 374—376.

<sup>124</sup> It appears to me, from Froissart's expressions in another place, vol. 4. c. 101. p. 290, that this conversation with the earl

of March was at the time of the commotion, 1386 and 1387 : So that it is not contrary to the duke's assertion in his confession, that since that period he had done nothing treasonable against the king.



The duke's own confession gives no foundation for it. That is simple and probable. He admits that he stirred with other men to obtain the obnoxious commission, and that *at that time* he came armed into the king's palace; but it is essential to remark, that he adds, "I dede it for drede of my liff;" thus giving us his sanction to the assertion of the chroniclers already noticed, that the king's government had attempted his destruction. He acknowledges that he took the king's letters from his messengers, that he had spoken in "sclanderouse wyse" of the king; and that, when in fear of his life, he had communed to give up his homage, and had consulted certain clerks "whether that we myght gyve up our homage for drede of our lyves." He confesses that he had spoken of the deposal of the king, and for two days had assented to it, but had afterwards agreed to put him "as heyly in hys estate as ever he was." Having admitted these things, he declares that it was his meaning to "have do the best for his persone and for his estate;" and he closes with this solemn asseveration, "It was never myn entent, ne my wyll, ne my thought, for to do thyng that schuld have bene distresse or harmyng ageyns the salvation of my lyege loordy's persone as I wyll answer to for Godd at the day of jugement<sup>125</sup>." He afterwards added, that he had told Richard, that if he wished to remain king, he must not interfere for sir Simon Burley.

Thus the duke was not accused of any new matter, and confessed none; on the contrary, he denied any such<sup>126</sup>: and there is

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The Duke's  
confession.

<sup>125</sup> See his confession in old English, in Parl. Plac. pp. 378, 379.

<sup>126</sup> "And as of any newe thyng or orde-  
naunce that ever I shuld have wyten or  
knownen, ordeyned or assentyd, pryve or apert,  
that schuld have bene ageyns my loordes  
estate or his luste, or ony that longeth abowte  
hym, syth that day that I swore unto hym

at Langeley, on Goddys body trewly; and by  
that oothe that I ther made, *I never knew of  
gaderyng* ageyns hym, ne none other that  
longeth unto hym." Plac. Parl. p. 379. Lang-  
ley was the place of reconciliation, in 1387,  
between the king and the duke. See ib.  
p. 421.

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is no evidence in the chronicles that he was pursuing any treasonable enterprise. The points that Froissart, who, having been introduced to Richard, and graciously received by him<sup>127</sup>, had adopted the feelings of the court, mainly states, in addition to the advice to the earl of March to take the crown, are, that the duke was indignant at the unwarlike conduct of the king with respect to France, and urged the termination of the truces and the renewal of the war, and that he was meditating how to excite trouble in England, and to renew the war with France<sup>128</sup>. The observations recorded by Froissart, as made by his brothers, the dukes of Lancaster and York, on his arrest, seem to imply that his real crime, besides the king's personal hatred, was his aversion to such a peace with France as had been then concluded. "They said that their brother, a prince so high and brave, ought not to have been murdered for idle words; for, though he had spoken voluntarily, in cold blood, against the treaties sealed between England and France, yet he had done nothing against them; and between saying and doing there was great difference; and that for words only, he could not deserve death, nor so cruel a punishment<sup>129</sup>."

His arrest  
and murder.

But whatever were the deserts of Gloucester, the conduct of the king on this occasion cannot but be lamented and discountenanced. The duke was peaceably residing at his mansion-house at Pleshy near London, when Richard with seeming friendship visited him, betrayed him into an arrest, and had him conveyed to Calais and killed. The whole is declared to have been planned, as the treachery was executed by, the king himself. In common life we should class the nephew that would make himself the personal agent

<sup>127</sup> He describes his first introduction by the duke of York, in his vol. 4. c. 61. p. 177. and his subsequent presentation to the king of his book *D'Amours*, which pleased Richard, "tres grandement car il estoit enluminé,"

and superbly covered and ornamented, c. 63. p. 184.

<sup>128</sup> Froiss. l. 4. c. 86.

<sup>129</sup> *Ib.* c. 90. p. 270. I quote the pages, in this reign, from the French edition.



agent to entrap an uncle from the bosom of his family, in order to destroy him, among the basest of mankind. That the king should go, as described by his most friendly historian, with the determined purpose of murder in his heart, and see his uncle surrounded by his wife and children in all the enjoyment of domestic felicity ; that he should eat and drink with them ; should tell them a wilful falshood, to induce the duke to confide in his honour, and to accompany him without any protecting train ; should behold the embraces of the parent and his family on their separation, the one hoping, the other promising a speedy reunion ; should himself take leave of the wife and children of this venerable relative, whom he knew they would see no more ; that he should ride with his victim by his side, familiarly chatting with him till he reached the spot where he had ordered the fatal ambush to be planted ; and should then ride off, not hearing, or hearing without pity, the upbraiding cries of the lion, whom he had with such persevering and calculating meanness seduced into the toils<sup>130</sup> ; these circumstances present such a train of appeals to the heart, that we cannot but wonder

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<sup>130</sup> Froissart thus describes the arrest, 208 : " The king went after dinner, with part of his retinue, to Pleshy, about five o'clock. The duke of Gloucester had already supped ; for he was very sober, and sat but a short time at table, either at dinner or supper. He came to meet the king, and honoured him as we ought to honour our lord ; so did the duchess and her children, who were there. The king entered the hall, and thence into the chamber. A table was spread for the king, and he supped a little. He said to the duke, ' Fair Onele ! have your horses saddled, but not all ; only five or six ; you must accompany me to London ; we shall find there my uncles Lancaster and York, and I mean to be governed by your advice, on a request they intend making to me. Bid your maitre d'hôtel fellow you with your people to London.' The

duke, who thought no ill from it, assented to it pleasantly enough. As soon as the king had supped, and all were ready, the king took leave of the duchess and her children, and mounted his horse. So did the duke, who left Pleshy with only the eighth of his servants, three esquires, and four varlets. They avoided the high road to London ; but rode with speed, conversing on various topics, till they came to Stratford. The king then pushed on before him, and the earl marshal came suddenly behind him with a great body of horsemen, and, springing on the duke, said, ' I arrest you in the king's name.' The duke, astonished, saw that he was betrayed, and cried with a loud voice after the king. I do not know if the king heard him or not, but he did not return, but rode away." Froissart, l. 4. c. 86. p. 254.

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wonder that they could successively occur, during the space of six hours that the duplicity lasted, to the king's personal sensation, without paralysing his dreadful purpose. When he first formed his plan, and revealed it in confidence to the earl marshal, he is represented by Froissart to have expressed his conviction, that if he did not destroy the duke, he should be destroyed himself: But if this danger existed beyond his own disturbed imagination, would it not, with the facts on which it rested, have made a part of the judicial accusation? When we consider the combination of deliberate hypocrisy, treachery, lawless violence and cold-hearted cruelty, which mark this transaction; we cannot avoid inferring, that there could have been no legal criminality in the duke, or the royal character would never have stooped to such degradation.

The king also took a part in deluding the earl of Arundel, and chose to be present at his execution<sup>131</sup>. To deceive the nation into a momentary tranquillity, he published a false proclamation, that it was not for former, but for new misdemeanours, that he had arrested this nobleman<sup>132</sup>. The Duke was carried from the Thames to Calais, and murdered in an inn in that city<sup>133</sup>.

Such

<sup>131</sup> Froiss. c. 90. p. 269. The earl marshal, whose wife was Arundel's daughter, himself bound that nobleman's eyes. *Ib.* Arundel reminded him and another, that they ought to have been absent. He felt the edge of the axe, and said, that it was sharp enough, and requested the executioner to dispatch him with one blow, which he did. After his death, the king was much disturbed: as he attempted to sleep, he thought he saw the count standing before his eyes, threatening him. He cursed the day that he first knew this nobleman. He was more seriously alarmed, when he heard that the vulgar deemed Arundel a martyr, and made pilgrimages to his grave. One night he had his body dug

up, to see if the head had rejoined the neck, as the populace thought! At last he had all marks of the grave levelled, that no one might know the spot of burial. *Wals.* 393.

<sup>132</sup> Hence Walsingham calls it a "ficta proclamatio," 392. See it in *Rymer*, vol. 8. p. 6.

<sup>133</sup> The Parliamentary Rolls contain the confession of John Halle, one of the assistants in the murder, and a valet of the duke of Norfolk, which gives the following particulars:—That the duke of Norfolk came to him at Calais with one John Colfox; that he was called out of his bed; that the duke asked him, if he had heard any thing of the duke of Gloucester; he answered, that he thought



Such transactions were naturally followed by the calamities which pursued this unworthy prince. That he was regarded as a tyrant<sup>134</sup>; that he thought it necessary afterwards to have a constant guard of 200 men surrounding him wherever he went, with arrows and bows always bent<sup>135</sup>; that the agent, who had assisted him in these sanguinary

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thought him dead. Norfolk said, No; but that the king had charged him to murder the duke, and that the king and the duke of Albemarle had sent their valets, and that he must be there in his (Norfolk's) name. Halle prayed that he might be suffered to go away, though with the loss of all his property, rather than do such an act. The duke of Norfolk told him he must be there, or he should forfeit his life, and struck him violently on the head. They went to a church there, and found others ready, and all were sworn to secrecy. They accompanied the duke of Norfolk to the prince's inn, who placed Colfox, Halle, and six others, in a room there, and went away. The duke of Gloucester was then brought in, and delivered to Serle, a valet of the king's, and to Franceys, a valet of the duke of Albemarle. Seeing them, the duke said, "Now I know I shall do well," and asked Serle how he did. Serle and Franceys then took the duke into another chamber, saying, they wished to speak with him. There they told him, that it was the king's will that he should die. The duke of Gloucester answered, that if it was his will, it must be so. They asked him to have a chaplain; he agreed, and confessed. They then made him lay down on a bed, the two valets threw a feather-bed upon him; three other persons held down the sides of it, while Serle and Franceys pressed on the mouth of the duke till he expired, three others of the assistants all the while on their knees weeping and praying for his soul, and Halle keeping guard at the door. When he was dead, the duke of Norfolk came to them, and saw

the dead body. See Halle's deposition, who was afterwards hanged and quartered for the murder. Parl. Plac. vol. 3. pp. 452, 453.

<sup>134</sup> Gower wrote a chronicle in Leonine hexameters, which follows his Vox Clamantis in the Tib. MS. In this he characterizes Gloucester, Arundel, and Warwick, from their crests, as the swan, the horse, and the bear. He describes indignantly the king's deceit and cruelty. This is the work which he says he wrote "his deno Ricardi regis in anno," not the Vox Clamantis. See MS. Tib. p. 171.

<sup>135</sup> Hardyng has preserved this trait. After mentioning that the king made at this period five dukes and four earls, he adds,

- - - - Then he had, eche daye,  
Twoo hundred menne of Chesshyre wher he  
laye,  
To watche hym aye, whersoever he laye.  
He dred him aye so of insurreccion  
Of the commons and of the people aye.  
He trusted none of all his region  
But Chessshire menne for his proteccion.  
Wherever he rode, with arowes and bowes  
bent  
Thei were with hym, aye redy at his entent.  
Hard. Chron. p. 346.

The conduct of this Cheshire guard is thus mentioned in the parliamentary accusation of the king: "He drew to himself a great multitude of malefactors from Cheshire, some of whom passing with the king through the kingdom, as well within his household as without, beat, wounded, and killed divers liege subjects of the realm, plundered people's goods,

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Henry of  
Lancaster  
discloses  
Norfolk's  
conversation.

sanguinary scenes, should become alarmed for his own safety, and should reveal the king's vindictive projects; and that all the loyalty of the country should desert him when he most needed its assistance, cannot surprise us; for who was safe in the nation, if its sovereign, at the liberal age of thirty, could adopt a system of conduct so lawless, and pursue it with impunity. His arbitrary levies of money from his subjects increased the general disaffection <sup>136</sup>.

It was in riding together between Brentford and London, that the duke of Norfolk made, as Henry of Lancaster declared, that disclosure to him of the king's intentions, which he stated publicly in parliament. These were, that the king intended to get rid both of Henry and himself, of the duke of Lancaster, and other nobles whom he mentioned, notwithstanding the apparent reconciliation, and even assurance of their safety <sup>137</sup>. Norfolk had been one of the barons who had united to throw down the king's first favourites; who

goods, and refused to pay for their food, and violated women. Though complaints were made to the king, he favoured them in their actions, trusting to their protection," &c. *Plac. Parl.* p. 418.

<sup>136</sup> Rymer has preserved some documents of what may be called his forced loans, vol. 8. p. 8.

<sup>137</sup> The Parliamentary Rolls have preserved Henry's account of this important dialogue. It is in substance as follows:—*N.* We were near being destroyed.—*H.* Why?—*N.* For the fact of Rodecothrigge.—*H.* How can that be, for he has pardoned us, and declared in parliament that we have been good and loyal towards him?—*N.* Notwithstanding that, he will do with us as he has done with others before, for he means to annul that record.—*H.* That will be marvellous, for the king uttered it in public; and afterwards to annul it!—*N.* This is a marvellous world, and a false one; for I know well, that if it had not been for some, your father of Lancaster and yourself would have been taken

or dead when you came to Windsor after the parliament. But the dukes of Albemarle and Essex, and the earl of Worcester declared, that they would never agree to destroy a nobleman without just and reasonable cause. The malice of this fact lay with the duke of Surrey, and the earls of Wilts and Salisbury; and they had sworn to destroy six other lords, Lancaster, yourself, Albemarle, Essex, the marquis and myself.—*H.* God forbid that the king should agree to this, for he has sworn to all these, to be a good lord to them.—*N.* So he has to me many times on the sacrament; but I cannot trust him the better for that. The king means to draw in the earl of March and others, to join the four lords in destroying those I have mentioned.—*H.* If it be so, we shall never be safe in the waters.—*N.* Certainly not; for if they cannot accomplish their purpose now, they will be about us to destroy us in our houses within ten years hence. *Plac. Parl.* vol. 3, p. 360.



who had afterwards become one of his confidants, had commanded the ambush that seized the duke of Gloucester, and had superintended his murder, and also the execution of lord Arundel. It was not improbable that the king, who had begun to dip his hands in blood, should have found, what all men find, that one crime makes others necessary, and should think the lives of other great and popular noblemen to be incompatible with his safety, lessened as that was by the popular resentment for Gloucester's death. It was still less improbable that an agent, who had seen with what little remorse his master had destroyed a near relative, and now heard of similar deeds being in contemplation, should become disquieted about himself, endangered as he was by his personal knowledge of the king's guilt. That in this state of anxiety he should unbosom it to a former confederate, and now connected friend, was not unnatural. He needed counsel and support, and by this disclosure he endeavoured to obtain them.

The conduct of Henry, on receiving this information, is perfectly intelligible. His safety lay in publicly disclosing it. To announce the meditated projects, was to defeat them. No king or counsellors would be afterwards so insane as to execute them. Hence, if the information was true, he saved his father's life as well as his own, by disclosing it. If Norfolk had amused him by a false statement, it must have been done for some treacherous purpose, which would be best defeated by publicly disclosing it; he therefore mentioned to the king in parliament what he had been told. He affected to consider them as dishonest words, slanderously spoken; but he had committed them to writing, and he produced the memorial.

By this step he certainly sacrificed the duke of Norfolk. But what right had such a man, stained as he was, to expect confidence from another, or even secrecy on a communication like this, which involved that other's life and his father's? The duke of Norfolk  
denied

The King  
banishes  
both.

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denied the charge, and a trial of battle was appointed between the two noblemen. The decision was postponed by the king from time to time, and to different places; but Coventry, and the sixteenth of September, were at last fixed for the combat. Both appeared in the lists; but, as they were preparing to charge, the king suddenly interfered. He forbade the engagement; and banished Henry of Lancaster for ten years from the kingdom, and the duke of Norfolk for life, whom he also deprived of all his property, except an allowance of one thousand pounds a year<sup>138</sup>. This conduct has been thought capricious, but it is explicable if Norfolk's information was true. He banished Henry, because he wished him out of the way; he punished Norfolk, for disappointing his plans by his officious conversation. On this supposition we may add, that the king's conscience shrunk from the issue of the impending battle. He best knew whether he had cherished the designs which Norfolk had intimated. If Henry conquered, the dying breath of Norfolk, in the confession that was always taken on the accusation, if the beaten party survived, might, by confirming what he had spoken, have roused the endangered nobility and indignant people to a rebellion that would have driven him from his throne. To arrest the combat, was to leave the dangerous question, as Henry had put it, a possible slander of Norfolk on the king; or, as Norfolk's denial made it, a possible invention of Henry. The banishment of both had the aspect of impartiality; and its public pretext was, to prevent discord between their families.

His conduct. It is probable that Richard thought his policy perfect, for he shortly afterwards made Lancaster's banishment perpetual, at the same

<sup>138</sup> See the record of this in *Plac. Parl.* vol. 3. p. 382—384. Henry and Norfolk appear to have been put under arrest, till their combat; for Rymer contains an order to the governor of Windsor, to keep them

both in safe custody, vol. 8. p. 47. Walsingham remarks, that the sentence against Norfolk was issued on that day twelvemonth on which he had caused the duke of Gloucester to be suffocated, p. 394.



same time confiscating all his estates<sup>139</sup>;—alarmed seventeen counties with the threat of attacking them, and of subjecting them to treasonable punishment, for the measures adopted eleven years before on the downfall of his favourites; thus driving them to confess to his agents that they were traitors, and then, to redeem their lives by large payments<sup>140</sup>;—exacted, by letters patent sent to every county, oaths and obligations of implicit obedience, contrary to law, and exposing every one to future peril and extortions<sup>141</sup>;—banished the earl of Northumberland, and his popular son Hotspur, as traitors, and confiscated their estates, because, understanding that their destruction was meditated, they excused themselves from attending him<sup>142</sup>;—and then went to Ireland with a security as absolute, as if he had left no discontent or danger behind him. It is clear that he had now determined to be the tyrant, and he held the consequences in defiance<sup>143</sup>.

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Never

<sup>139</sup> Before Henry's departure, the king remitted four years of his banishment, possibly as a peace-offering to Henry's father, the duke of Lancaster. But the duke dying shortly afterwards, the royal policy changed. Henry then became duke of Lancaster, and thereby more formidable. His sentence was then arbitrarily made an exile for life, and all his property was seized.

<sup>140</sup> On these violent measures, see Wals. p. 396; and Plac. Parl. p. 420. By this iniquitous plan he raised vast sums, "Pro benevolentia sua recuperanda." Wals. The blank charters, called "Raggemans," which he compelled, were afterwards ordered to be returned to the cities and counties, and to be burnt. Plac. Parl. 432.

<sup>141</sup> Wals. 396. Plac. Parl. 421. This banishment made the people of London say, 'This hatred and rancour comes from the king's counsel, which will destroy him.'

<sup>142</sup> Froiss. c. 103. pp. 294, 295.

<sup>143</sup> The infatuation of Richard is extraor-

dinary, even from Froissart's expressions. He says, c. 101. p. 290. that the strangling of Gloucester had caused such noise and murmurs through England, as to be on the point of destroying and deposing the king, if Lancaster had not allayed them. That when Henry left London, 40,000 persons were in the streets, lamenting his departure; and the mayor, with a great number of the chief citizens, accompanied him to Dartford. c. 95. p. 280. That the king and his counsel ought to have considered how often the people of England, and especially of London, had strongly murmured, and were murmuring against him. p. 289. That the seizure of Henry's inheritance, was acting too much against right and reason, to the displeasure of too many respectable persons of England; and that things could not last, nor continue long in this state, if not amended; and that the larger part of the nobles, prelates, and commons of England, thus expressed themselves. p. 290. And that when the Londoners heard

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RICHARD II.Disaffection  
of the nation.

Never was any sovereign more confident of his power ; never was any sovereign more easily dethroned. It would appear that all classes of people were so united in opinion on the necessity of a change, that no hesitation either divided or delayed them. Richard had scarcely reached Bristol on his way to Ireland, but a general commotion and disorganization began<sup>144</sup>. The country became full of plundering bands. There was an universal exclamation, that the king only cared for his pleasures and his arbitrary will. The people said to each other, "The wicked king Richard of Bourdeaux will spoil every thing. Since he took the throne, nothing has prospered in England. He minds only idleness, dissipation with women, collecting great treasures, and destroying the nation. He has killed Gloucester and Arundel, banished Henry of Lancaster and the valiant Percys, and soon there will be no brave man left in England. Henry of Lancaster ought to be invited here to reform the government. Richard should be sent to the Tower with his partisans. Their works, which are infamous, will condemn them<sup>145</sup>."

Henry in-  
vited, and  
lands.

The citizens of London held secret counsels with some prelates and knights, and agreed to send for Henry, who was at Paris. The archbishop of Canterbury undertook to be the messenger. He went to Valenciennes, disguised as a pilgrim ; proceeded to Paris, obtained a secret interview with Henry, and, describing the state of England, intreated him to return to it. At first the duke gave no answer ; but, leaning on a window which looked into the gardens, he pondered on the enterprise. At length he agreed to consult his

heard of his going to Ireland, they said, 'He goes to his destruction.' c. 103. p. 294. And that even many of the barons, knights, and esquires of England, who went with him to Ireland, were discontented with him, and very often said, 'Our king governs himself too foolishly, and trusts bad counsel.' p. 294.

<sup>144</sup> Les hommes generalement parmi Angleterre se commencerent fort a emouvoir et elever l'un contre l'autre. Froiss. c. 104. p. 295.

<sup>145</sup> This is the substance of Froissart's chapter, c. 104. pp. 296, 297.



his friends ; and they urging him to undertake it, he took leave of the French court<sup>146</sup>, travelled to Bretagne, sailed from thence with three ships, having only fifteen lances or knights in his company ; landed at Ravenspur, in Yorkshire, in the beginning of July, and was soon joined by the Percys and others so eagerly, that in a short time he was at the head of 60,000 men<sup>147</sup>.

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During these transactions, Richard was pursuing with some personal credit<sup>148</sup>, but with much suffering to his army from the want of supplies, his Irish war<sup>149</sup>. At this most critical juncture, when every hour was pregnant with evil to his cause, the adverse wind kept him for six weeks without any news from England<sup>150</sup>. At last it changed ; and he then received the unexpected tidings of the arrival and progress of Henry, and that the archbishop of Canterbury had been exhorting the people to insurrection, and declaring that he had received a bull from the Pope, promising remission of sins to all who should assist it<sup>151</sup>. Some advised the king to sail immediately, to meet the danger ; others thought it more prudent that he should not go till he could sail with his army, and that the earl of Salisbury<sup>152</sup> should precede him, and collect all who were disposed in England to support him. At first, many joined the earl from Wales and Cheshire, to the number of 40,000 men ; but not seeing the king, who arrived  
eighteen

<sup>146</sup> Froiss. c. 105—107. pp. 297—301.

<sup>147</sup> Wals. 397.

<sup>148</sup> Ib. 396.

<sup>149</sup> We have here a valuable original document on the history of this part of the life of Richard II. by a French gentleman, who came over to England with a Gascon knight, and attended him to the king in Ireland. It is written in very prosaic French rhyme. The MS. adorned with illuminations portraying the leading events of each chapter, is in the British Museum, Harleian MSS. No. 1319. Its first four chapters describe

the campaign with the Irish ; of whom see also Froissart's description, vol. 4. c. 63.

<sup>150</sup> - - - Bien six sepmaines

Sans pouit oir de nouvelles certaines  
d'Angleterre—

Tant fu le vent contraire.—MS. Harl.

<sup>151</sup> Harl. MS. c. 5.

<sup>152</sup> This nobleman is thus described in this Manuscript :—

Hardi estoit et fier, comme lions ;

Et si faisoit balades et chançons,

Rondeaulx et laiz

Tres bien et bel si n'estoit-il que honis lays.

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lands in  
Wales;Remains at  
Conway  
castle in  
disguise.

eighteen days later, they gradually dropped off, till not an hundred men remained with the earl, who retired to Conway castle, awaiting the king.

When Richard, on his landing, found the formidable state of Henry's army, and reflected on its determined and necessarily desperate spirit, he shrunk from the danger of giving it battle, and, leaving his troops from Ireland at Milford Haven, under the command of the duke of Albemarle, he put on the disguise of a poor priest, that he might not be recognized, and at midnight set off privately<sup>153</sup> for the fortress at Conway, with his half brother the duke of Exeter, the loyal duke of Surrey, and twelve other friends. Exeter advised the king to send to Henry, to know what his wishes or intentions were. This counsel was adopted, and the dukes of Exeter and Surrey<sup>154</sup> undertook the commission. The army at Milford finding itself deserted by the king, gradually dispersed.

The king and Salisbury continued at Conway in great alarm and agitation. They soon quitted this place for Beaumaris, about ten miles distance; and thence proceeded to Carnarvon castle, a handsome and strong place, with pleasant woods for hunting. Here the king awhile abode, his face often discoloured, regretting his destiny, and cursing the hour and the day when he went to Ireland. He addressed, with great earnestness, his prayers to the virgin Mary for assistance<sup>155</sup>, and expressed his hope that the king of France would feel for him, and assist him<sup>156</sup>. He found the

<sup>153</sup> Lors s'avisa que, sans dire nul mot,  
Se partiroit a minuit de son ost  
A peu de gent. Car pour rien il ne vot  
Estre aperçus.  
De robe estrange fu la endroit vestus  
Comme un prestre, qui a peu de menus;  
Pour la doubte qu'il ot d'estre cogneuz  
De ses nuisans.

This dress, in the illumination, is represented to be a black cowl and a scarlet habit.

MS. Ib.

<sup>154</sup> - - - Le bon duc de Soudray  
Qui fu loyal jusqu'a la mort et vray.  
MS. Ib.

<sup>155</sup> Disant souvent  
- - - - "Doulce Vierge Marie!  
Secourez moy. Dame! mercy vous crie."  
MS. Ib.

<sup>156</sup> En doulce France certainement j'espoir,  
Que mon beau pere  
Si en aura au cuer douleur amere—  
MS. Ib.



the castle without either garrison or provisions. There was nothing but straw for him to lay upon; and, after enduring this state of great poverty for five or six days, he returned to Conway.

The dukes reached Henry at Chester, who received them courteously. He heard the earnest address of Exeter, and told them the king had not considered their rank, in sending them for messengers, and intimated, that he might detain them a week for his answer. They pressed for an immediate dismissal, lest they should be suspected of treason. Surrey was committed to the castle, but Exeter was allowed to be at liberty. Henry secured a strong fortification near Chester, with all Richard's treasure<sup>157</sup>, and then held a council of his adherents. The archbishop reminded him, that Richard was in Wales, a very defensible country, from its mountains, and therefore advised, that an amicable message should be sent to him, professing a desire of peace, requiring that a parliament should be summoned, when those who were guilty of his uncle's death should be punished, and declaring that the king and Henry might be good friends. The prelate is charged with having recommended this, because the sea being open to Richard at Conway, there was no other way to get him into their power<sup>158</sup>. This deceitful counsel was adopted, and the earl of Northumberland was selected to be the instrument to carry it into execution. What can be more expressive of the low state of moral principle, in all orders of the country, than these transactions? Northumberland set off with 400 lancers and 1000 archers. Henry said to him at parting, "Fair cousin, be careful to accomplish your enterprise;" and the earl replied, "Either by reason or by subtlety, I will bring

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Henry's plan  
to secure  
the king.

<sup>157</sup> Car il y ot cent mile marc et mieulz  
D'esterlins d'or,  
Que le bon roy Richart la eu tresor  
Faisoit garder et si avoit encor

D'autres joyaulx grant foison—  
J'oy conter  
Qu'a deux cent mille mar d'or estimer.  
<sup>158</sup> MS. Ib. MS. Ib.

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bring him to you<sup>159</sup>.” Northumberland reached the castle of Rudland, and, though nearly impregnable, it was surrendered to him. He was now within ten miles of Conway. Under a rock in advance of Rudland, he placed two companies of his armed followers in ambush, with orders to remain there, till they saw either him or the king. He then proceeded to Conway, and was admitted to the royal presence. He began his speech with declaring, that he was not going to utter lies<sup>160</sup>. He then stated, that Henry required, That the king should be in future a good and true judge; that he should fulfil justice on those who should be named; that a parliament should be convened at Westminster; that Henry should be made the grand justiciary of the kingdom, as his father and ancestors had been for an hundred years; that those who should be arraigned, were the dukes of Exeter and Surrey, the earl of Salisbury, and the bishop of Carlisle, who had advised the king to put his uncle to death; and that he should then be king and lord, with Henry his justiciary, who would come on his knees, and humbly ask his pardon. He said he would swear to all this upon the sacrament; and he intreated the king to accompany him to the duke<sup>161</sup>.

Mutual  
perfidy of  
Northumber-  
land and the  
king.

The perfidy of this address is sufficiently revolting. It was unhappily to be equalled by the perfidy of the king himself. He retired to consult his own friends. He said, “My lords, we must grant his requests; I see no other way: all is lost; you must perceive it as well as I do. But I swear to you, that he shall die a bitter and a certain death, whatever I shall assure him<sup>162</sup>. Consider

<sup>159</sup> MS. Harl. c. 5.

<sup>160</sup> Je vous dirai

Ce qu’il vous mande. Riens n’en mentiray.  
MS. Ib.

<sup>161</sup> MS. Ib.

<sup>162</sup> - - - Le roy

Dist ‘Beaux Seigneurs! nous lui ferons  
ottroy;

Car autre tour, par Marie, je n’y vey.

Tout est perdu. Vous le veez comme moy.

Mais je vous jure

Qu’il en mourra de mort amere et sure,

Quelque chose que je lui asseure.’

MS. Ib.



sider the outrage and the injury which he has done us. I will send some persons among the Welsh, and will cause them to assemble secretly, and then some day we shall have the power." Having thus settled his own plan of treachery, he met the treacherous earl, and, making him pledge his conscience to his sincerity, he accompanied him to Chester.

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It is painful to see majesty, on whose welfare so greatly depends the well-being of the nation, untaught by the calamities which its own errors had contributed to produce. With a self-delusion that could not have existed in a sound mind, Richard saw nothing in the universal disaffection of his subjects but the personal faction of a few nobles. In all his conversations with his confidential friends, so carefully recorded by his observing companion, there is not one self-accusation for past misconduct ; not one plan or purpose expressed of a better or wiser government ; no perception of the impolicy and evils of his system of violence. We find nothing but new resolutions of vengeance ; fruitless regrets, that he had suffered Northumberland to deceive him ; passionate prayers, and unmanly lamentations. The weakness or vanity of the mind that could contemplate such a fearful change of fortune without one moral impression or prudential recollection, or any suspicion of its own previous mistakes, must have been great and pertinacious. But that, amidst his own meditations of deception, he should be so easily entrapped by it in another, in whom he had every reason to suspect it, is but a new instance that a large degree of folly always accompanies vice, and the cunning which it loves to practise.

Richard, self-satisfied with his hope of out-manœuvring his adversaries by his future contrivances, surrendered himself up to their selfish deceit. Both Northumberland and he congratulated themselves on their craft in outwitting each other ; and both perished violently ; Richard, by those whom he meant to circumvent ; the earl

King  
accompanies  
Northumber-  
land.

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earl and his son by the man for whom he acted this treachery. They journeyed together in specious amity ; but when the king, passing the rocks, saw the ambush rise, with their spears bristling around him, he exclaimed, “ I am betrayed ; can this be true ? O God of Paradise, assist me ! ” The narrator of these interesting scenes, who was accompanying the king here, says, “ We were all thrown into a state of bitter doubt ; I wished then that I had been in France, for I saw them all almost in despair<sup>163</sup>. ” The king was so near the soldiers, that he could not escape ; on one side the sea, on the other the rock, forbid it. He burst into such lamentations, that it was pitiable to see him. He exclaimed often, “ True God ! what mischief and trouble I shall have ; I see that this man is carrying us to the duke, who little loves us. O Virgin Mary ! sovereign queen ! have mercy on me, for I perceive that I am lost if you do not deign to visit me. ” The king was convinced that nothing could be done. His friends did not exceed twenty-two<sup>164</sup>. He complained much to the earl of Salisbury, and frequently said to him, “ I see that I am dead without redemption ; for I am sure that duke Henry hates me. Alas ! why did we believe this earl upon his plighted faith ? ” The earl here came and knelt before him, and apologized for the appearance of the armed men, on the pretext that the country was in a state of warfare. The king told him, that he did not want such attendance, that it was not what he had promised him, and that he would return to Conway. The earl answered, that he must carry him to the duke, because he had promised to bring him within ten days. He caused bread and wine to be presented to the king, who dared not refuse it. After their dinner, they proceeded to Flint, where they

<sup>163</sup> Lors furent tous en amere doubtance.  
J'eusse voulu bien alors estre en France.  
Car je les vy pres de desesperance.  
MS. Ib.

<sup>164</sup> Ainsi desoit le roy, qui nul pouoir  
N'avoit droit la  
Car nous ne fumes que vingt, ce me sembla,  
Ou vint deux. MS. Ib.



they rested. All that night the king passed in great disquiet. He saw his enemies on all sides, desiring to put him to death as a tyrant. He passed the lingering hours in recollection of his queen; in exclamations to her father, the French king; in vain vexation that he had trusted Northumberland, "who has delivered us into the hands of the wolves. I doubt we shall all be killed, for these people have no remorse. May heaven confound them, both their bodies and their souls <sup>165</sup>!"

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Henry marched from Chester to Flint, with all his power, above 100,000 men. Richard rose early, heard mass with his friends <sup>166</sup>, and then ascended to the castle walls, where they fronted the sea. He there beheld his adversaries advancing; he heard the sound of their horns and trumpets; and recommended himself to heaven, again inveighing against the earl who had entrapped him. He wept much, and his confidential friends mourned with him <sup>167</sup>. The archbishop, preceding the rest, came and fell at the king's feet, who raised him, took him apart, and conversed a long time with him. The prelate endeavoured to comfort his sovereign, and to assure him that his person should be safe <sup>168</sup>. Soon Henry was seen approaching with his great and splendid force. It was led by the celebrated Hotspur. It wound along between the sea and the lofty rocks that edged the sands. Neither hedge nor bush intervened,

Henry  
advances to  
Flint;  
22 Aug. 1399.

<sup>165</sup> "Or est trop tart. las! pourquoy creu-  
mes nous

Northomberlant? qui en la main des loups  
Nous a livrez? Je me doute que tous  
Ne serons mors.

Car cele gens cy n'ont en eulx nul remors,  
Dieux leur confonde, les ames et les corps.

MS. Ib.

<sup>166</sup> One knight with them would not take off "la devise" of his lord the king, which was *the Stag*. He was the last that carried the order of Richard in England. MS. Ib. which now begins a prose narration.

<sup>167</sup> This author says, "I believe that in this mortal world, no creature whatsoever, whether Jew or Saracen, could have seen these five together, without having great pity and compassion in his heart for them. MS. Ib. The five were, the king, the earl of Salisbury, the bishop of Carlisle, and the two knights, Scroup and Ferbrice. Ib.

<sup>168</sup> On this conversation, the writer declares, "what they said I know not; but the earl of Salisbury told me afterwards"—as in the text. MS. Ib.

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intervened, and the shining arms were beheld moving in a train of floating splendour, with all the triumph of martial music, till the leaders reached the castle gates. The duke there conferred for some time with Northumberland, and agreed not to enter till the king had dined. Richard sat down to his repast, but, observing his four companions maintaining their ceremonious respect, he said, "My kind and loyal friends, as you are in the same peril of death for your fidelity, sit down with me." As they dined, many knights came rudely in and out to see him, not from kindness, but to disperse around the castle, that all their heads should be taken off. The king remained long at table, not to eat, but to prolong the time, as he knew he should be afterwards removed<sup>169</sup>.

His interview  
with the  
king.

At last the dinner was ended, and the archbishop and Northumberland went to fetch the duke, who had arranged his followers in fine order before the fortress. Henry entered the castle, armed complete, except his bacinet. The king was brought down from the donjeon, where he had dined, to receive him. Henry bent lowly on seeing him, and again as he advanced, with his hat in his hand. The king then uncovered his head, and said, "Fair cousin of Lancaster! welcome." The duke, again bowing nearly to the ground, answered, "My lord! I am come back sooner than you ordered me. I will tell you why. The common report of your people is, that, for twenty or twenty-two years, you have very badly and rigorously governed them, and so, that they are quite discontented. But if it please our Lord, I will help you to govern better than you have done." The king replied, "Fair

<sup>169</sup> The menaces of the knights so alarmed the author of this MS. that he says, "Every one had fear and fright, for nature teaches every creature to dread death more than any thing else; and for myself, I never was so terrified before." He and his friend then found out one of the heralds, and begged

him to save their lives. The herald on his knees introduced them to Henry, and petitioned in English for their safety. "The duke answered us in French, 'My children! do not be alarmed at any thing you see; keep near me, and I will warrant your lives.' This assurance made us very joyful." MS. Ib.



“ Fair cousin ! since it pleases you, it pleases us.” The duke spoke to all the rest, but Salisbury, and then with a fierce and loud voice cried out, “ Bring here the king’s horses.” Two miserable animals were then led out. Richard was placed on the one, and Salisbury on the other, and they issued from the castle. On their appearance without the walls, such a roar of military music burst from the horns, trumpets, and other instruments, that the shore rebounded with the sound, and thunder would have rolled unheard<sup>170</sup>. In this state they entered Chester, the common people with pretended reverence mocking their unfortunate sovereign: The duke committed him to the care of the sons of Gloucester and Arundel, who most hated him, for the loss of their fathers, and, dismissing the chief part of his armed force, proceeded towards London. At Litchfield, the king tried to escape: he slid from the window of the tower in which he was confined, into the garden; but he was discovered, and, with much ill treatment, brought back. From that time ten or twelve armed men never left his chamber, day or night. As they approached London, the lord mayor, with his sword of state, at the head of the city companies, in all their costume, came out to meet them. The cry of the populace was, The good duke of Lancaster for ever! And their conversation turned on the miracle of his conquering the kingdom in two months; that he ought to be a king, who thus knew how to conquer; and, that he would subdue one of the chief parts of the world. They compared him to Alexander the Great. As about to enter the city, Henry exclaimed, “ Fair sirs! here is your king—think what you will do with him.” Their clamorous answer was, “ Let him be taken to Westminster.” He was given up to them, and the people then took him and led him westward; while the duke passed through Cheapside to St. Paul’s, amid such acclamations, that,

says

<sup>170</sup> MS. Harl. c. 5.

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says our author, "if our divine Lord had come down from heaven, he could not have received greater." At St. Paul's, Henry, having prayed at the great altar, turned to the tomb of his father, at its side, which he had not yet seen, and wept much over it<sup>171</sup>.

The record of the "renunciation" of Richard, states, That the lords and knights there enumerated, went to him on Michaelmas day in the Tower—that the earl of Northumberland reminded him, that at Conway he had promised him and the archbishop, that he would yield up and renounce his crown, from his confessed inability and insufficiency—that the king then professed himself willing to fulfil what he had promised, and desired a copy of the act of cession for his consideration; this was given to him, and they retired—that, after dinner, the king desiring to see the duke, Henry and the archbishop went to him and conversed with him—that the king, "with a cheerful countenance," took up the act of cession, read it aloud, and signed it, and absolved all his subjects from their allegiance, and then said, that if he had the power, the duke of Lancaster should be his successor—that he took his ring of gold from his finger, and put it on the duke's, as the mark of his intention and will<sup>172</sup>. How much of this ceremony was hypocrisy, forced acquiescence, or fiction, it is unnecessary now to inquire. The objections against the king's reign were recorded in the full assembly of parliament<sup>173</sup>. Henry rose up, and, crossing himself on his forehead and breast, claimed the crown<sup>174</sup>. The lords and commons were asked, what they thought of it? they immediately assented that he should be the king. The archbishop took him by the hand, and led him to the throne. He knelt, and prayed awhile before it, and then allowed himself to be placed in it, amid the

<sup>171</sup> MS. Harl. c. 5.

<sup>172</sup> Parl. Plac. vol. 3. p. 416. where the act of renunciation is printed.

<sup>173</sup> See them, Parl. Plac. 417—422.

<sup>174</sup> His speeches will be noticed in the chapter on our language and prose literature.



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the shoutings of the people. The prelate harangued them with a sermon; and when he finished, Henry made another short address<sup>175</sup>, and the ceremony of his election ended. The parliamentary deputation went afterwards to Richard at the Tower, and made a formal renunciation of their allegiance, ending with declaring, that none of all the states and people would thenceforward bear him faith, nor do him obeisance, as to their king. Richard merely answered, ‘ That he looked not therafter. Bot he sayde, that after all this, he hoped that his cosin wolde be goode lord to hym<sup>176</sup>.’ Henry was crowned with the usual solemnities, and Richard was adjudged by the parliament “to a perpetual prison, to remain there *secretly* in safe custody<sup>177</sup>.”

In estimating the character of Richard, we may remark, that it was its principal defect, that he allowed himself to be advised and governed by young men. All the chroniclers, even his friends, complain of this imprudence<sup>178</sup>. Nothing rolls on so easily and so safely as an established government, if that moderate wisdom superintends it, which there are mature minds enough in every country to supply. But no event of life occurs without its consequences, and still less the greater incidents. It is in the power of foreseeing these, that human wisdom chiefly consists. But the young love rather to dare the future than to provide for it. Their fearlessness concurs with their inexperience to deceive them; and too late they learn, that the events of life are the masters, not the servants of those who attempt to command what they should have anticipated and managed. Young himself, it was natural that Richard should like the young. But the possessor of the crown

<sup>175</sup> Vide preceding Note.<sup>176</sup> Plac. Parl. 424.<sup>177</sup> Ibid. 426.<sup>178</sup> So the archbishop in parliament: “This honourable kingdom of England, the most abundant angle of riches in all the world,

has been a long time ruled and governed by the counsel of children and widows.” Plac. Parl. 415. Was the king’s mother intended by the word “widows?”

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crown of a civilized people is under the necessity of consulting his prudence instead of his pleasure, and to bend self-will to good advice<sup>179</sup>, if he hope to make his reign respectable or happy. Unless the sovereign improves with his nation, his inferiority will interfere with his popularity. Richard's companions flattered him into habits, which abated that personal reverence which is a stronger safeguard of the throne than law. Alternations of evil then occurred. The disrespect of his subjects affronted his pride, and disposed him to be violent and vindictive. His arbitrary measures increased their alienation, and the superior qualities of his uncles were recollected to his disadvantage. New alarms arose from their popularity. The times, from other causes, were agitated; and his ministers suggested and enforced harsh and angry councils, which excited the revenge of the endangered, and increased the national irritation. This redoubled the king's desire of punishing it; and measures were adopted which made the existence of either party dangerous to the other.

His love of magnificence was certainly the quality of a princely spirit; and his flowing liberalities display something so contrary to a narrow soul, that we can hardly contemplate them without some praise<sup>180</sup>. But all bounteous feelings, to be estimable must be just. If he had been a nobleman, giving away his revenues, his

<sup>179</sup> Froissart observes, that "he was too strongly repugnant to all counsel, and would never hear any." vol. 3. c. 77. It was the remark of the duke of Lancaster, "Our nephew the king of England will ruin all, before he has done. He believes easily bad advice, which will destroy him and his kingdom. He caused my brother and the earl of Arundel to die, because they shewed him the truth, which he will never hear, nor speak to any man who attempts to explain it to him against his inclinations." Froiss. vol. 4. c. 92.

<sup>180</sup> Thus to Leo the king of Armenia, who came to England, he presented a thousand marks of gold in a gilt ship, with the grant of a pension of the same sum yearly. Wals. Hist. No preceding sovereign seems to have been more profuse of new creations of nobility; and he granted annuities to many. He was fond of giving elegant presents. Thus, when his uncle Lancaster went to Spain, he presented him with a golden crown, and his duchess with another. Knyght. 2676.



his munificence would have been the distribution of what was his own, and the extent of his ability would have been its natural limit ; but the treasury of a sovereign is filled with the money of his people, and it is their property, not his, which he expends. It is their comforts which he is sacrificing when he is lavish. His splendour must be accompanied by the sighs and privations of many ; and the taxations which emptied exchequers make necessary, produce a querulous, critical, and discontented country, offending its sovereign by its ill-humour, and offended in its turn by his resentments. Richard so repeatedly excited and experienced this evil, that he must have been almost wilfully blind to the gathering storm, to have continued his expensive ceremonies to the very end of his reign <sup>181</sup>.

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His destruction of his uncle was as impolitic as it was wicked ; for, independent of the moral retribution which, from the days of *Œdipus* to our own, under whatever system of fate, furies or providence, has been always remarked to pursue such actions, it set an example of violated law and right, which before two years expired was fatally retorted on himself. But this reign is remarkable for the proofs which it affords of the practice as well as the uselessness of violence and wrong. No one prospered that had recourse to them ; yet no one would forbear to use them. By violence, the king's favourites sought to oppress the nobles, and were themselves overthrown ; by violence, Gloucester, with his friends, overpowered their political antagonists, and perished afterwards by the violence of the king, who, within two years, was himself deposed by the noblemen that with an unjust

<sup>181</sup> Froissart's description of the king's feasts and jousts in the year 1390, vol. 4. c. 22. will give some idea of the splendor of his public entertainments. In 1396, notwithstanding the necessities of his treasury, he spent on his marriage above 300,000 marcs,

besides the costly presents he made. Wals. Hist. 391. And see the description given of his public entrance into London, in 1392, Knyghton, 2740. He ends with saying, that such expensive honours had never been shewn to any king of this country before.

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unjust exertion of power he had recently exiled. Wrong was punished by wrong, till almost every one suffered who had used it. One lesson may be therefore drawn from this unhappy period, That when a political evil presses, to use illegal and unconstitutional means of removing it, is to multiply its mischiefs, and to give them a continuity which cannot easily be terminated.

Yet it is impossible not to pity this unfortunate monarch. The celebrity of his father was his first misfortune, for it interfered with that disciplining education which lays the true basis for human rectitude. The accession to a crown at the age of eleven, was a contingency of nature which completed the moral deterioration which the last years of dotage of his grandfather were not adapted to prevent. Whatever therefore may have been his natural capacity or disposition, all the causes of corrupting and weakening his mind, that courtly pleasure or pride could furnish, were from his situation in full operation upon him at that age when their influence is the least resistible and the most pernicious. Human welfare requires that the crown should be hereditary; and this necessity will sometimes place it on a brow too young to wear it so early, and yet acquire the manly virtues, which harder life best produces. Richard's moral imperfections must be censured for the sake of society, which royal vices peculiarly afflict. But it is just to consider him as in a great degree the victim of his situation and circumstances. This is neither an apology nor an atonement for his misconduct; but it is a claim on our compassionate sympathies, for, with such inducements to error, who is there but might have fallen?

Richard appears to have had a taste for literature. He received graciously Froissart's book<sup>182</sup>; and he stopped Gower on the Thames,

<sup>182</sup> Froissart's account is, "He opened it and looked within it, and it pleased him very much. He asked me on what it treated? I answered, 'on love.' He was rejoiced at this



Thames, to ask him to book some new thing<sup>183</sup>. In the works of our ancient poet, we may trace the public impression produced by the successive conduct of his sovereign. The *Vox Clamantis* discovers the apprehensions excited in the first part of the reign, by the unfavourable tendencies that appeared in the royal character<sup>184</sup>. In the original preface to the *Confessio Amantis*, the king's amiable traits are brought to our notice<sup>185</sup>. In the alteration inserted in the sixteenth year of the reign (1393) we have repeated complaints of the divisions of the country<sup>186</sup>; intimations that they proceeded from tyranny and cruelty<sup>187</sup>; and that law had put on a double face<sup>188</sup>, which seems to allude to the anticipated opinions obtained or extorted from the judges. At the same time Gower seems impartial, for he implies that both the king and his opponents were equally wrong, and equally averse to good counsel:

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this answer, and looked into the book in several places, and read, for he could read and speak French very well, and caused one

of his knights to take it and put it into his private room, and was very gracious to me for it." vol. 4. c. 63.

<sup>183</sup> In Themse whan it was flowende,  
As I by bote came rowende,  
So as fortune hir tyme sette,  
My liege lord perchance I mette.  
And so befelle as I cam nigh,  
Out of my bote, whan he me sigh,  
He had me come into his barge,  
And whan I was with hym at large,  
Amonges other thynges seyde

He bath this charge upon me leyde—  
Some new thyng I shulde boke,  
That he hymselfe it might loke.

Gower's *Confess. Am. Chal.* p. 3.

<sup>184</sup> See Notes 73, &c. in p. 214.

<sup>185</sup> I conceive these lines to be applied to the king:—

A gentill herte his tonge stilleth  
That it malice none distilleth;

But preiset, that is to praised—p. 4.

The poet expunged this part of his prologue in Richard's 16th year.

<sup>186</sup> - - - Love is falle into discorde  
And that I take into recorde—  
The common voice which maie not lie.

What shall befall here afterwarde  
God wote; for now upon this tide  
Men see the worlde on every side  
In sondrie wise so diversed  
That it well nigh stant all reversed.

<sup>187</sup> He talks of princes  
- - - that didn than amiss  
Through tyrannie and crueltee.

<sup>188</sup> In stede of love is hate guided:  
The warre wolle no peace purchase  
And lawe hath take hir double face,  
So that justice out of the waie  
With rightwisenes is gone awaie  
And thus to loke on every halve  
Men sene the sore without salve.—p. 8.

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counsel<sup>189</sup>. But in his Chronicle, written after the murder of the duke of Gloucester, and the execution of Arundel, his sovereign is mentioned in terms of indignant reproach<sup>190</sup>. He had praised Henry of Lancaster, when he could not have supposed he would have been the king<sup>191</sup>; he panegyricised him afterwards with a long Latin encomium, but written with bad taste<sup>192</sup>.

The dethronement of Richard was the melancholy result of a chain of evils in which he had entangled himself, and which his last paroxysms of arbitrary power had roused the country to terminate. But in every case of regal deposition, such a violation of law, such an infringement of individual right, such a perplexity of justice, such a dislocation of authority, such a diffusion of insurrectionary principles, such a future tendency to factions, such an excitement to ambition, and such a relaxation of public order and private principle, must accompany it; that it never can occur with national impunity. It becomes at last a mixture of reciprocal wrong as well as reciprocal injury, and much calamity follows it. Hence, if a more moderate, wise, and disinterested conduct in the

<sup>189</sup> - - - But the powere  
Of them that bene the worldes guides  
With good counsell *on all sides*—  
  
For all reason wolde this;  
That unto *him*, whiche the head is,  
The members buxom shall bowe:  
And *he* shulde eke *their truth* alowe  
With all his herte, and make them chere.  
For good counseill is good to here.  
Although a man be wise hymselfe,  
Yet is the wisdom more of twelve.—p. 8.

<sup>190</sup> See MS. Tib. A 4.

<sup>191</sup> This booke - - -  
I sende unto mine owne lord,  
Whiche of Lancaster is Henry named.  
The hygh God hath hym proclaimed  
Full of knyghthode and all grace.  
Gower's Confess. p. 8.

<sup>192</sup> See MS. Tib. A 4.—Six lines may be cited as a curious endeavour to introduce the Welsh peculiar mode of medial and final rhyming and alliteration into Latin verse—

O recolende, bone, pie rex Henrice, patrone;  
Ad bona dispone, quos eripis a pharaone.  
Noxia depone, quibus est humus hic in agone.  
Regni persone quo vivant sub ratione.  
Pacem compone, vires moderare corone:  
Regibus impone frenum sine conditione.

MS. Ib.



the opponents of government, when they impeached the chancellor, and when the king, from his age, not twenty, could be only halting between vice and virtue, would have turned his character to a nobler issue, and saved the country and themselves the disgrace and confusions that followed—the mischiefs are chargeable upon their vindictive spirit and selfish purposes. We cannot now allot to either party their proper share of censure or exculpation: But however their respective merits stand, there can be no difficulty in perceiving, that no reign inculcates more impressively the danger of flattering unbecoming habits in the sovereign—of beginning systems of violent and unjust counsels—and of connecting the supreme authority, either with undue exertions of that municipal law, which ought to be the venerated protector, not the oppressor of society, or with the invasion of public rights and privileges, which all may constitutionally claim, and are interested to preserve. Violence is a dreadful sword, which both parties can wield; and, when once put in action, neither can foresee who will become its victims, nor where will be the limits of its destruction. But perhaps there is no mistake more rooted in the world, than that Power is policy: Few will confess in reasoning, that what we can do, it is wise to do; yet almost all men act upon this seducing, though misleading principle.

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WE have Richard's person and character thus drawn by the Monk of Evesham:—  
“A fair, round and feminine face, sometimes flushed; abrupt and stammering in his speech; capricious in his manners; prodigal of gifts; extravagantly splendid in his entertainments, and dress; timid and unsuccessful in foreign war; irascible, proud and rapacious at home; devoted to luxury; and

remaining sometimes till midnight, and sometimes till morning, in drinking and in other excesses that are not to be named; grievously extorting taxations from his people every year of his reign, and wasting on his vices the money obtained under the pretext of repelling the national enemy.” Hist. Rich. pp. 169, 170.

# HISTORY

## OF

# E N G L A N D.

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### C H A P. VI.

HISTORY OF THE REIGN OF HENRY THE FOURTH.

1399—1413.

PART  
III.

**T**HE reign of Henry IV. was short and disturbed. He had gained the sceptre from the unpopularity of the preceding sovereign; not from his own pretensions, plottings, ambition, or peculiar desert. The majority of the nation wished the removal of Richard, and they gratulated Henry with warm acclamations, because he presented himself as the substitute; because his reputation was fair; and because, from his affinity to the royal blood, he was, though not the next entitled<sup>1</sup>, yet so near in right, that his elevation made the smallest legal breach in the succession, which on such a dislocation of the sovereign power by violence, and under the pressing exigencies of the nation, would occur. But however varnished by plausible or reasonable pretexts, however popular or seemingly expedient or even inevitable, it was still an acquisition of power by force, without right; an invasion of the supreme authority by a grandson indeed of Edward III. but still by

<sup>1</sup> The earl of March, descended from Lionel father, was the next heir to Richard, and, in duke of Clarence, the elder brother of Henry's strict hereditary right, preceded Henry.



by a subject, and contrary to the national rules of hereditary descent. It could not stand upon its own merits. It rested upon the necessities made by the vices of others. It succeeded by the temporary support of the great and populace, and principally of the earl of Northumberland and the clergy; and it had no foundation if their humours changed. It was therefore naturally insecure, mutable, and disquieting<sup>2</sup>.

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VI.

REIGN OF  
HENRY IV.

The acts of Richard's last parliaments were repealed, and the friends of Henry liberally rewarded by grants and titles<sup>3</sup>. But the people began to murmur as soon as the change they desired had been completed, because their resentments were not fully gratified. They expected the arrest and execution of those adherents of Richard, by whom they had been most oppressed<sup>4</sup>; and were displeased at the wise forbearance of the king, who, knowing that clemency may reconcile and attach, but that punishment sometimes irritates more than it deters, permitted the earls of Salisbury, Huntingdon, and others, to live unmolested. It was no impeachment of Henry's policy that these two earls entered into a conspiracy to assassinate him at Oxford, and afterwards to seize him at Windsor, and to destroy him. Privately informed of the plot, the king eluded the blow by withdrawing secretly to London. The ill-advised noblemen flew to their expected prey with vain attempt. They had dressed up an impostor somewhat resembling

Plots against  
him.

<sup>2</sup> Feeling the difficulty as to his legal right from Edward III. he had in parliament claimed the crown as descended from Henry III. and had obscurely hinted at pretensions on the ground of conquest, by declaring that no man must think that by way of conquest he would disinherit any man. *Plac. Parl.* vol. 3. p. 423. The embarrassment of his title probably produced the farce acted on his coronation. He was anointed with oil, stated to have been given by the Virgin Mary to Becket. It had lain hid till

it was found in Richard's reign, with an inscription, predicting that the sovereigns anointed with it should be champions of the church. The archbishop refused to apply it to Richard, but poured it upon Henry, obviously to create a popular impression, that he was chosen and appointed by heaven. *Walsingham* details this pretended miracle, p. 401.

<sup>3</sup> See the patents of their honours and titles in *Rymer's Fœd.* vol. 8. pp. 89—94.

<sup>4</sup> *Wals.* 402.

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resembling Richard, to personate that prince, and they were joined by many. But finding Henry prepared with 20,000 men to encounter them, they retreated towards Wales. At Cirencester they were defeated by the citizens, who took the earl of Salisbury, and put him to death. Huntingdon fled to Essex, and endeavoured to escape by sea. The adverse winds drove him back. He was seized by the people, and led to Pleshy, the mansion of their favourite Gloucester, where he was beheaded<sup>5</sup>. Many of their adherents were executed with severity. The death of Richard, dreadful in its nature, mysterious as to its cause, and suspicious from the time of its occurrence, followed these events<sup>6</sup>.

Scots  
defeated at  
Hamildon  
Hill.

The Scots attempted an invasion under their brave earl Douglas, which the earl of Northumberland and his gallant son Hotspur confronted at Hamildon Hill. The flower of the Scottish chivalry was taken or destroyed, and its celebrated leader became the captive of the Percys<sup>7</sup>.

A more

<sup>5</sup> Wals. 403—405.

<sup>6</sup> Walsingham's account is, that hearing of the failure of his friends, he starved himself to death at Pomfret Castle. pp. 404, 405. So the chronicle of Croyland, which adds, that he was five days in dying. 1 Gale Script. p. 495. Famine may have been the death he suffered, but nothing had before appeared in his character that indicated the capability of such a Spartan resolution. It is more likely that it was not a suicide. His body was shewn publicly at St. Paul's. Wals. 405.

<sup>7</sup> Wals. 407, 408.—Rymer has printed the prohibition to the earl of Northumberland to dispose of his Scotch prisoners, dated 22 Sept. 1402. vol. 8. p. 258. On the 22d Oct. Northumberland brought some of them to the king at Westminster. The Parliament Rolls mention the steward, son and heir of the duke of Albany; the king of Scotland's

brother; three other Scotsmen, and three French. Plac. Parl. 437. But Douglas was not among them. Their reception is thus described: "They were led by the earl of Northumberland and several lords, and other Englishmen, before our lord the king in his palace of Westminster, and knelt three times to his royal person; first, at the entrance of the Whitehall in the said palace; secondly, in the middle of the same hall; and thirdly, before the king near his royal seat. The steward requested Henry to treat them honourably and graciously. He told them that they were welcome; but reminded them, that their white words and fair promises had occasioned him to retire from Scotland, which he would not have done so lightly if he had known them better. One of the captives then humbly prayed him, that it would please his benignity to give him grace and pardon



A more dangerous movement occurred in Wales, under Owen Glendower. Educated at Westminster, he had been Henry's shield-bearer; but claiming unsuccessfully, by peaceful means, some lands from another nobleman, he attempted to seize them by force and with much personal cruelty<sup>8</sup>. The king directed him to be pursued as a disturber of the public peace. The Welsh, delighted at seeing a Cambrian of abilities waging warfare with the English, began to join him. The mountains of Snowdon afforded him a refuge against Henry's forces; and when the king retired, he emerged to new successes, new devastations, and increased popularity. As he approached Herefordshire, the earl Mortimer, the nobleman whose title to the throne preceded Henry's, led out his militia to chastise him; but was beaten and taken prisoner. Owen's talents and activity, the defensible means of the mountainous parts of Wales, the internal disturbances of England, and Henry's personal disquietudes, combined to give Glendower so many advantages, and to continue his triumphant ravages so long, that it became the popular belief that he was aided by the powers of magic<sup>9</sup>. The real demon that assisted him besides the natural impediments of the country, was the spirit of civil turbulence and proud disaffection which now agitated England<sup>10</sup>.

CHAP.  
VI.

REIGN OF  
HENRY IV.

Owen  
Glendower's  
insurrection.

To

pardon for what he had grieved him. The king assured the steward that he should not be troubled nor 'pensifs' for what had happened, because he was taken in the field like a valiant knight. They were afterwards led into the painted chamber, where they were

ordered to remain to eat with the king." Plac. Parl. 487.

<sup>8</sup> Wals. 405.

<sup>9</sup> Wals. 406, 407.—Hardyng, who lived at the time, gives us the general impression and his own:—

The kyng had never but tempest foule and raine,

As long as he was ay in Wales grounde;

Rockes and mystes, windes and stormes certaine.

All men trowed that *witches* it made that stounde.

Chron. p. 360.

<sup>10</sup> The king having experienced bad weather in Wales, it was believed that the rain, snow

and hail, by which his army suffered, had been raised by Glendower, with the aid of the devil.

PART  
III.REIGN OF  
HENRY IV.His difference  
with the  
Percys.

To be indebted to a subject for the crown, is to incur an obligation which gratitude can never return, and for which no requital will be deemed adequate. ‘So burthensome, still paying, still to owe!’ The sovereign, dissatisfied with the remembrance of a debt so unextinguishable, and jealous of the power that conferred it, will be always measuring the respect, misconceiving the conduct, suspecting the intentions, and dreading the versatility, of his benefactor. The subject, disproportionately elevated in his self-opinion by an evidence so fatal of his own importance and influence, which few could temperately bear, will be inexhaustible in his expectations of requital, irritable at every appearance of indifference, and indignant at the first breath of hesitation to grant the favours which he chooses to ask, however unreasonable or inconvenient. Solicitation from such an individual is demand. The delay or refusal of the concession will be thought insult and wrong. Hence, Northumberland and his family could not avoid seeming presumptuous, intruding, insatiable, and dangerous to Henry; while he would be always supposed by them to be more or less ungrateful, envious, treacherous, and malignant. The recollection of the deceit which Northumberland practised to Richard, would also preclude all confidence in his future demeanour, however specious or even truly honourable. Such fair semblance had he borne to his former master, when he was practising to betray him. What could give his new lord assurance against his future instability, or distinguish his allegiance from his hypocrisy?

devil. One incident fixed the opinion of many: Henry had pitched his tents in a very pleasant meadow, and was sleeping quietly, when a sudden hurricane and furious rain threw down his tent, and whirled his lance against him, striking the armour he wore. This seemed so like an aim from an invisible hand, that the agency of demons

was not doubted, though a little farther exertion of reasoning might have suggested, that supernatural power would not have struck so ineffectively. Some of their enemies had the art to involve the Minor Friars in the suspicion of joining in the demoniacal confederacy. Wals. 407.



hypocrisy? Impossible! Vice must submit to be suspected, and expect to be sacrificed by its companions in iniquity.

It is to these general causes of mutual dissatisfaction between parties so situated, that we must look for the origin of the warfare between the Percys and the throne; for the chroniclers have not discovered or detailed the beginning incidents. The king had not been a niggard in his favours to them. He made the head of the house, and his son, the lords of the northern marches, and his brother the governor of the prince of Wales. This man, the earl of Worcester, is stated to have abandoned his charge, and to have incited his nephew, the famous Hotspur, to rebel. In his young mind, proud of the undeviating favours of fortune, animated by its own love of enterprise and gallant daring, too sensible of its own merit, stimulated to ambition by deserved popularity<sup>10</sup>, and constitutionally warm and excitable, it was not difficult for a respected kinsman to rouse irritability and disaffection. He refused to bring his prisoners to the king, and was offended that he would not ransom Mortimer<sup>11</sup>. The family united in a determination to rebel. Douglas joined them. They spread assertions, that Richard was alive<sup>12</sup>. Their public papers were as empty, and probably as false<sup>13</sup>, as such productions usually were; and they seem to have produced no general sympathy. Hotspur now resolved to raise Mortimer, his wife's brother, to the crown<sup>14</sup>. But the

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VI.

REIGN OF  
HENRY IV.

Battle of  
Shrewsbury.

<sup>10</sup> Walsingham says, that in him ' spes erat reposita totius populi.' p. 409.

<sup>11</sup> Thus Hardyng, who was with the Percys, states,

But sir Henry his sonne ther would not bryng  
His prisoners in no wise to the kyng.

But the kyng he prayed for Mortimer,

That raunsomed might he been with his frendes so.

He saied hym nay, for he was taken prisoner

By his consent and treson to his foo.—Chron. p. 360.

<sup>12</sup> Wals. 410.

<sup>13</sup> Ib. 409.

<sup>14</sup> "He purpaid had Mortimer his coronement."—Hard. 361.

PART  
III.  
REIGN OF  
HENRY IV.

the country appears to have considered it more as a personal quarrel between two great families, than as a national concern; for the force with which the king went down to the battle at Shrewsbury, where Hotspur met him, and chose to fight, before his father, detained by sickness, had joined him, was but 14,000 men<sup>15</sup>; and Hotspur, who had now allied with Douglas, had as many. They are described by Hardyng as “9000 knyghtes, squyers and chosen yomanry, and archers fyne, withouten raskaldry<sup>16</sup>.” The king sent the abbot of Shrewsbury with offers of pardon and peace. By the persuasion of Worcester they were rejected, and the battle ensued. Hotspur chose his ground so that the king’s troops had to charge over a field of peas, which he had tied and interwoven. But this neither stopped nor broke them. The bowmen on both sides were vigorous and expert, and the discharges of their arrows were destructive to each party. Hotspur and Douglas directed their attack solely at the person of the king. The earl of Dunbar perceiving their object, withdrew the king from his endangered station. Their charge was so irresistible, that the king’s standard was thrown down, and the bearer, and the earl of Stafford, and sir Walter Blunt, destroyed. The prince of Wales, for the first time in a field of battle, exerted himself with a courage which checked the unfavourable opinions that had been formed of him, and was wounded in the face by an arrow. In the middle of the greatest fury of the conflict, Hotspur fell while piercing too eagerly and too adventurously into one of the royal battalions. His friends believing that he had slain his sovereign, were shouting “Henry Percy, kinge!” But as his death

<sup>15</sup> Wals. 410.

<sup>16</sup> With Percy was the erle of Worcester,  
With nyne thousande of gentyls all that wer,  
Of knyghtes, squyers, and chosen yomanry,  
And archers fyne *withouten raskaldry*.

Ellis’s Hardyng, pref. iii.

Otterburne states that Hotspur had 14,000 choice troops. p. 239.



death became known, his adherents began to break and fly. The king triumphed in every part; and Douglas, Worcester, sir Richard Vernon, and others, were taken prisoners<sup>17</sup>. Few battles had been fiercer or more decisive. It secured to Henry his crown. Sometime afterwards, the archbishop of York, a relation of the Percys, attempted another insurrection, but it was soon repressed<sup>18</sup>; and when the earl of Northumberland, at a later period, endeavoured to revive the struggle, he was easily defeated<sup>19</sup>, and Henry reigned till his death without being disturbed by any other competitor.

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REIGN OF  
HENRY IV.

The chief domestic feature of Henry's reign, and the most disgraceful one, and to his family the most calamitous, was the deadly persecution of the new religious opinions which he chose to sanction and enforce. His father had been the great defender of Wickliffe; but so were many of the courtiers of Richard<sup>20</sup>. Henry was base enough to bargain with the ecclesiastical power for its support, by promising a suppression of the Lollards. Richard had been urged by the hierarchy to perform this fatal office, but had been visibly reluctant, and had delayed to pursue it. The clergy found a willing instrument in Henry Bolingbroke, and their sacerdotal chief had, as already narrated, not only invited but supported his movements against Richard<sup>21</sup>. Henry was scarcely seated on the throne before he made his public requital of their services. He sent the earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland as his commissioners to the clergy assembled in convocation, to state, that they did not visit them, as under pre-

He supports  
the papal  
hierarchy.

ceding

<sup>17</sup> Otterburne, 239. Wals. 411.

<sup>18</sup> Wals. 416. Hard. 362.

<sup>19</sup> Wal. 419.—His head, venerable for its silver hairs, was brought to London and placed on the bridge. 'The common people lamented his misfortune not a little, recol-

lecting his magnificence, fame and glory.' Wals. ib.

<sup>20</sup> Particularly the earl of Salisbury, whom Walsingham calls 'Lolardorum fautor in tota vita; et imaginum vilipensor; contemptor canonum; sacramentorum que derisor.' 404.

<sup>21</sup> See before, pp. 241 & 243.

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ceding reigns, to exact money, but to beg their prayers, and to certify that the king would sustain all the liberties of the church, and destroy as far as he could all heresies, errors, and heretics<sup>22</sup>. In performance of this pledge, in his second year was passed that sanguinary act, the first that stains the English statute book on this subject, which orders heretics to be burnt, that their punishment might deter others from forming erroneous opinions “contrary to the catholic faith and the determination of the church<sup>23</sup>.” An unworthy sacrifice of moral principle to greatness—to that greatness, which was made very brief with him—briefer to his son, and productive only of misfortune, deposition and death, to the next and last of his race. The retribution is striking. By thus incorporating his dynasty with the corruptions and evils of the Papal hierarchy, he made one of these two alternatives inevitable; either that the improvements of mankind should be intercepted, or that the sovereignty of his house should cease; a mad and desperate stake, which could only have the issue that ensued. The Bolingbrokes disappeared, and the reformation proceeded<sup>24</sup>.

HIS

<sup>22</sup> See the record of the convocation and its proceedings, printed in Wilkins' Concil. vol. 3. pp. 237—245.

<sup>23</sup> Stat. 2 Hen. 4. c. 15. This was followed by an order to burn William Sautre, ‘jadys chapeleen heretic.’ It is addressed to the mayor and sheriffs of London, and commands them, ‘Coram populo publice igni committi ac ipsum in eodem igne realiter comburi fac, in hujusmodi criminis detestationem, aliorum que cristianorum exemplum manifestum.’ Plac. Parl. vol. 3. p. 459. And see the proceedings against him in Wilk. Conc. vol. 3. p. 254.—To the same parliament the clergy presented a petition, praying that no one should be suffered to preach without the licence of the diocesan; nor teach any thing,

nor write any book, against the catholic faith or the determination of the church, nor have conventicles or schools of the sect; and that all their books and writings should be delivered up to the diocesan of the place. To this the king returned a full assent, adding his order, ‘That if any were convicted of such opinions, and would not abjure them, that they should be burnt before the people ‘in eminenti loco, ut hujusmodi punitio metum incutiat mentibus aliorum.’ All mayors, sheriffs and bailiffs, were ordered to be assisting the bishop and his commissioners in executing all the above directions. Plac. Parl. vol. 3. p. 467. Persecution could not be carried farther. Did it avail?

<sup>24</sup> The clergy also petitioned and carried another



His transactions with France were conducted on the policy of preserving amity with that country. He renewed the truce for twenty-eight years, and proposed a marriage between his son and a French princess. This connexion was eluded. The French court, notwithstanding the truce, encouraged the insurrections against Henry; but he persisted in his pacific plans till he was released from all dread of domestic rebellion; he then retaliated by interfering in the civil disorders that were afflicting France, and sent a force to Normandy to aid the duke of Burgundy against the duke of Orleans<sup>25</sup>. The most remarkable feature of this expedition, and it is a trait of great national honour, equal to the laurel of any victory, was the spirited exhibition which its commanders, sir Gilbert Umfreville and sir John Gray, gave to the conflicting French nation, of English humanity and courageous generosity. With the usual ferocity of civil warfare, the duke of Burgundy ordered the prisoners taken from his enemies' party to be slain. The English commanders resisted the sanguinary mandate, declared that they would die with their captives rather than see them destroyed, and formed into battle-array to support their noble purpose with their lives, in case their allies should have persisted in its execution. Astonished, but instructed by such magnanimous feelings, the duke abandoned his cruel intentions; and when the English force

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HENRY IV.

His conduct  
towards  
France.

another point from Henry, which his predecessors had so strongly struggled for; this was, that they should not be amenable to any secular judge. Plac. Parl. p. 494.

<sup>25</sup> See the various public papers published on the affairs with France, in Rymer's 8th volume; and see also Walsingham's account of the piratical attempt of some French ships

on Plymouth, the Isle of Wight and Dartmouth, in 1403 and 1404, p. 412; and of their actually landing in the next year at Milford Haven from 140 ships, to assist Owen Glendower, p. 418. The armament to Normandy was put under the command of his second son, the duke of Clarence. Ib. p. 425. It was sent from the prince's army in Wales.

PART  
III.REIGN OF  
HENRY IV.Addresses of  
the commons  
against the  
clergy.

force returned home, sent with them his letters of commendation and thanks <sup>26</sup>.

The support which Henry gave to the established hierarchy did not wholly preclude his parliament from attempting to reform it. In his fourth year, the house of commons petitioned that all monks who were French by birth should be expelled from the country ; that all priories in the hands of foreigners should be seized ; that every benefice should have a perpetual vicar ; that all persons advanced to benefices, should be made to reside upon them, and to be hospitable to the poor ; and that no one should be allowed to enter or to be received into either of the four orders of friars, under

<sup>26</sup> I quote, with pleasure, the lines of the contemporary versifier, who has not only recorded, but applauded this incident. He says of the duke of Burgundy,

Theim to haue slayn, he comaunded then eche capitayn  
His prysoners to kyll then in certeyn.

To whiche Gilbert Vmfreuile, erle of Kyme,  
Aunswered for all his felowes and there men,  
They shuld all die together at a tyme,  
Or theyr prysoners so shulde be slayn then ;  
And with that toke the felde as folke did ken,  
With all theyr men and all theyr prysoners,  
To die with them as worship it requyers :

He said they wer not come thyther as bouchers,  
To kyll the folke in market or in feire,  
Ne theim to sell, but as armes requiers  
Theim to gouerne without any dispeyre,  
As prysoners owe home agayn repeire ;  
For fyne paying as lawe of armes wyll  
And not on stockes not in market theim to kyll.

With whom syr John Graye as his cousyn dere  
And all Englyshe with many other of Fraunce  
With their prysoners full familier  
Batayled in felde with full strong ordinance ;  
More like to fight then to make obeysaunce :  
And helde the erle of Kyme for theyr cheiftayn  
To lyue and dye vnder his baner certayne.

Hardyng's Chron. p. 368.



under the age of twenty-one. To this last request the king returned a limited assent, that no children under the age of fourteen should be admitted without the consent of his parents<sup>27</sup>.

As these attacks of the commons were obviously but the prelude to others, the chancellor, in his speech to the parliament on the next session, declared that the king had commanded him to state, That it was the royal will that holy church should be maintained as it had been in the times of his progenitors, with all its liberties and franchises; that every kingdom resembled a human body, and that the right side was the church, the left the temporal powers, and the other members the commonalty of the nation<sup>28</sup>. The house of commons heard the mandatory rebuke, but immediately addressed the king to remove his confessor, and two others, from his household. Henry submitted to their pleasure, not only to dismiss the obnoxious persons, but even to add, that he would in like manner displace any other individual “about his royal person, if he had incurred the hatred or the indignation of his people<sup>29</sup>.” He also assured them, that he wished to be as good a king as any of his predecessors had been, as far as he was able; and he begged them “not to be abashed from shewing him whatever they thought would be pleasing to God, and honourable and profitable to him and his kingdom; and that he would very willingly perform it on their good counsel and advice<sup>30</sup>.” They prayed, that in settling his household, honourable and virtuous persons, and of good reputation, might be appointed and notified to them<sup>31</sup>, and that no foreigners might be permitted to be there<sup>32</sup>. The king, anxious for popularity, graciously assented. In the next year the house requested that he should “live upon his own.” With the same good humour he answered,

<sup>27</sup> Plac. Parl. vol. 3. pp. 499—502.

<sup>28</sup> Ib. p. 525.

<sup>31</sup> Ib. p. 525.

<sup>28</sup> Ib. p. 522.

<sup>30</sup> Ib. p. 525.

<sup>32</sup> Ib. p. 527.

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answered, "The king thanketh hem of here gode desire, willyng put it in execution als sone as he wel may <sup>33</sup>."

The commons renewing their attacks on the clergy, stated to the king, that while the knights of the kingdom exhausted themselves in resisting his enemies, the clergy sat idly at home, and did nothing. The archbishop of Canterbury replied, that the church paid their tenths more frequently than the laity their fifteenths; that their tenants went with the king to battle; and that they themselves were day and night saying masses and prayers for his prosperity. The speaker of the commons sneering at their devotions, the prelate knelt before the king, and besought him to defend the church, and declared that he would sooner expose his head to the sword than allow the church to be deprived of the least of its rights <sup>34</sup>. In 1410 the contest was renewed. A Lollard was burnt <sup>35</sup>; and the house of commons, as if in retaliation, presented a schedule to the king, shewing, that he might have from the temporal possessions of the bishops, abbots, and priors, that were then uselessly wasted, 15 earls, 1500 knights, and 6,200 esquires. The king, adhering to his policy of connecting his dynasty with the existing hierarchy, forbade them to discuss such subjects. On this rebuke, they petitioned that at least the clergy might be subjected to the lay tribunals. This application was refused. They persevered to request, that the statute against the Lollards might be changed or modified; and they were answered, that it ought to be made more severe <sup>36</sup>. This conduct committed the king and his family with the whole nation on this momentous and deeply interesting subject.

Henry's  
alarms, cha-  
racter, and  
death.

That Henry's personal enjoyment of his greatness was embittered by much danger, alarm, and disquietude, was a natural consequence of

<sup>33</sup> Plac. Parl. vol. 3. p. 549.

<sup>34</sup> Wals. Hist. 414, 415.

<sup>35</sup> Wals. 421.

<sup>36</sup> Wals. 422.



of its forcible origin<sup>37</sup>. A throne is rarely the seat of happiness. Peculiar personal qualities, and great serenity in the political atmosphere, the most variable of all things, are requisite to give felicity to a crown. If Henry had succeeded in the regular line of inheritance, he was formed to have enjoyed a reign as popular and as prosperous as either of his two first namesakes; but there was an unsoundness in the principle of his greatness, which made its continuance precarious, and its enjoyment embittered. He was altogether a superior man. He had shewn the enterprising activity of his mind by his campaign in Prussia<sup>38</sup>. We may infer his literary taste from his inviting to England the celebrated French lady and memoir-writer Christine de Pisan<sup>39</sup>. His courage and decision of mind were shewn, not only in his landing against Richard, but in the celerity and effect of his movements against Hotspur.

It is supposed that he was meditating a crusade when death surprised him, at an age that is to many but the season of vigorous manhood.

<sup>37</sup> Otterbourne describes a three-pointed instrument which the king found so placed in his bed, that if he had thrown himself upon it as usual, the weapon would have pierced him. p. 232.—Hardyng thus alludes to his personal dangers :—

O very God, what torment had this kyng  
To remember in bryef and shorte entent,  
Some in his sherte put ofte tyme venemyng,  
And some in meate and drinke great poysonment ;  
Some in his hose by great yniagement  
Some in bed straw yrons sharpe ground well & whet  
Enuenemed sore to slee him if he had on them set.

Some made for hym diuers enchauntments  
To waste hym oute and vtterly destroye ;  
And some gave hym batayle full felonement  
In felde within his realme hym for to noye ;  
And on themselves the hurte and all the annoye  
Ay fell at ende, that honged were and heded  
As traytours ought to bene in every stede.—Hardyng's Chron. 370.

<sup>38</sup> Wals. 377.

<sup>39</sup> Mem. de Christ. de Pisan, p. 95.

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REIGN OF  
HENRY IV.

manhood. He was subject to epileptic fits, and had been attacked by one after his return from Scotland, in which he lay as dead for several hours. They returned in 1413, amid his Christmas festivities at Eltham<sup>40</sup>. He recovered enough to continue them; but after their conclusion, as he was about to open his parliament, the fatal attacks recurred with a leprous affection of face<sup>41</sup>, and he expired in the fourteenth year of his reign, having, probably from his resolution of supporting the persecutions of the hierarchy, outlived the popularity with which it was commenced<sup>42</sup>.

<sup>40</sup> Otterbourne, 263. 272. Wals. 426.

<sup>41</sup> Mezeray intimates that he died of a leprosy. The truth is probably implied in the soliloquy which Hardyng puts into his mouth:—

Lorde I thank the with all my herte,  
With all my soule and my spirytes clere,  
This wormes mete, this caryon full vnquerte,  
That some tyme thought in worlde it had no pere,  
This face so foule that leprous doth apere,  
That here afore I haue had suche a pryde  
To purtraye ofte in many place full wyde.—Chron. p. 370.

<sup>42</sup> So Hardyng, who lived in his reign, expresses—

Of whome the realme great ioye at first had ay,  
But afterwarde they loued not his araye:  
At his begynnyng full hye he was commende  
With comons then, and also lytell at the ende.—Chron. p. 371



# HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

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## CHAP. VII.

HISTORY OF THE REIGN OF HENRY THE FIFTH,  
OR, HENRY OF MONMOUTH.

1413—1422

**W**ITH the traditional irregularities of the youth of Henry V. we are early familiarized by the magical pen of Shakspeare; CHAP.  
VII. never more powerfully magical, than in portraying the associates and frolics of this illustrious prince. But the personifications of the poet must not be expected to be found in the chroniclers, who have annalised this reign. It is a Froissart who dramatises and paints with living descriptions and characteristic anecdotes; not a rhetorical Elmham, a modern Titus Livius, profaning an immortal name<sup>1</sup>; a barren Otterburn; a Hardyng, versifying meagre facts, without either spirit or detail; or a Walsingham, capable of better things, but too zealous for the destruction of the Lollards, to detail the faults of a king, who degraded and endangered his reign

<sup>1</sup> Thomas of Elmham was prior of Lenton, and Titus Livius an Italian. Both have written the reign of Henry V.; both have nearly the same facts, and in the same order; but their composition is very different. Livius presents a plain and perspicuous statement, rather homely; Elmham a pompous and verbose amplification of the same incidents, more suitable to the taste of Persia than of England. Otterburn's Chronicle is not above the level of the commonest monkish annalist. Hearne has published all three authors.

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III.  
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HENRY V.

Henry's  
youth.

reign by persecuting and burning these unprotected reformers. The general facts of the irregularities, and their amendment, have never been forgotten; but no historical Hogarth has painted the individual adventures of the princely rake. The most authentic circumstances of his youthful life may be comprised in the following incidents.

On his father's exile, he was taken by Richard II. to his palace<sup>2</sup>, and in his twelfth year accompanied him to Ireland. He is there described by a person in the expedition, as a young, handsome, and promising 'bachelor.' The king made him a knight, with this address, "My fair cousin, be noble and valiant;" and to do him honour, and to fix the favour in his memory, at the same time raised eight or ten others to this dignity<sup>3</sup>. When the news arrived of his father's landing in England, Richard expressed his feelings to the young prince; but Henry, reminding the king of his own innocence and youth, Richard acquiesced in the propriety of his self justification<sup>4</sup>.

On his father's obtaining the crown, he was declared prince of Wales, duke of Cornwall, and earl of Chester<sup>5</sup>; and afterwards duke of Aquitaine, and heir apparent to the kingdom of England<sup>6</sup>. It is related that he received some part of his education at Oxford, under the care of his uncle, the well known cardinal Beaufort<sup>7</sup>. In his thirteenth year he attended his father into Scotland<sup>8</sup>, being the second expedition in which he became personally acquainted with military movements. When the king went into Wales to repress Glendower, Henry was acting under him, while his brother was sent to govern and preserve Ireland<sup>9</sup>. In the next summer,

that

<sup>2</sup> Thomas de Elmham, p. 5. Titus Livius, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> MS. Harleian, No. 1319, already quoted in the latter part of the preceding reign.

<sup>4</sup> Otterburn, p. 205.

<sup>5</sup> Plac. Parl. vol. 3. p. 426.

<sup>6</sup> Plac. Parl. p. 427.

<sup>7</sup> Rous Hist. Reg. Angl. Stowe Chron. p. 342. Luders' Essay, p. 54.

<sup>8</sup> Tit. Liv. p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Plac. Parl. p. 486.



that rebellion of the Percys occurred, which shook his father's throne. In the furious battle of Shrewsbury, he felt that upon its issue depended the fortunes of his house, and his soul rose to an energy equal to the greatness of the struggle. Though wounded in the face, he refused to quit the field, as he was desired; "With what spirit will others fight," he exclaimed, "if they behold me, the son of their king, retiring frightened from the battle? Lead me to the foremost ranks, that I may animate my fellow-soldiers by my conduct, and not merely by my words." He made a fiercer attack, and assisted to win the hard-fought victory<sup>10</sup>.

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Having thus had four times the experience of military affairs in Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and England, his father deemed him competent, though but sixteen, to conduct the troublesome war in Walês against Owen Glendower, and appointed him lieutenant of the forces<sup>11</sup> directed against this obstinate and active chieftain. In this petty, but difficult warfare, all the qualities of an able general were exercised and formed. Privations, vigilance, enterprise, patience, and perseverance, were successively required. In the second year of his campaigns there, we find him petitioning parliament for supplies to guard the Marches effectually<sup>12</sup>; and in the following spring he defeated, with an inferior force, a Welsh army of 8000 men from Glamorgan and its neighbourhood. He details his success in a respectful and modest letter to his father<sup>13</sup>. But its date from Hereford, and the scene of the conflict

Intrusted  
with the war  
in Wales.

<sup>10</sup> Tit. Liv. p. 3. Elmham, p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> Rymer's Fœd. vol. 8. p. 291. It is dated 7 March 1403.

<sup>12</sup> Plac. Parl. 549.

<sup>13</sup> M. Luders has translated it from the original French in Rymer; I insert it as a specimen of the prince's style:—

"Most dread sovereign lord and father.—  
In the most humble manner that I may

in my heart devise, I recommend myself to your royal majesty, humbly praying your gracious blessing. Most dread sovereign lord and father, I sincerely beseech God graciously to shew his providence towards you in all places; praise be to him in all his works! For on Wednesday the 11th of this instant month of March, your rebels of the parts of Glamorgan, Morgannock, Usk, Netherwent,

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conflict being in Monmouthshire, imply that he had not been able to penetrate effectually into the interior of Wales, but was contented to watch the border counties. Though he was then but seventeen, his services in this war were so highly estimated, that the house of commons, by their speaker, requested of the king, that for the safeguard of his subjects, and to resist the malice of the Welsh rebels, the prince might be continually residing and attending to those hostilities<sup>14</sup>. They also addressed the king to send his letters, under his privy seal, to the prince, thanking him for his good and unceasing labour and diligence, which he had endured and continually sustained in his honourable person, to conquer that revolted country<sup>15</sup>. In the same year the speaker prayed, that the prince might be ordered to go with all possible haste to Wales, on account of the news which had arrived of the rebellion of the earl of Northumberland<sup>16</sup>; and in 1407 requested that he might be graciously thanked for the great labour, diligence, and diseases which he had many times suffered, in resisting the great rebellion of the Welsh<sup>17</sup>. The prince, kneeling, immediately afterwards,

Netherwent, and Overwent, drew together to the number of 8,000 men, by their own account, and went in the morning of the same day, and burnt part of your town of Grosmont, within your lordship of Monmouth and Jennoia."—After mentioning his opposing force, he adds, "And there, by the aid of the blessed Trinity, your men won the field, and overcame all the said rebels; of whom they slew in the field, by fair reckoning upon our return from the pursuit, some say eight hundred, and some one thousand, being questioned upon pain of death. Nevertheless, be it one or the other in this account, I will not dispute. And to give you full information of the whole affair, I send you a person worthy of credit therein, one of my faithful servants the bearer hereof, who was in the battle, and very satisfactorily performed his

duty, as he has ever done. Now such amends hath God ordained you for the burning of your houses in your town aforesaid. And no prisoners were taken, except one who was a great chieftain among them, whom I would have sent to you, but that he is not yet able to bear the journey. And with respect to the course I propose to hold hereupon, please your highness to give credence to the bearer hereof, in what he will himself inform your highness on my part. And pray God ever to keep you in joy and honour, and grant that I may shortly have to comfort you with more good news. Written at Hereford the said Wednesday at night.

Your most humble and obedient Son,  
HENRY."

<sup>14</sup> Plac. Parl. 569.

<sup>15</sup> Ib. 569.

<sup>16</sup> Ib. 576.

<sup>17</sup> Ib. 611.



afterwards, before his father, generously interceded for the duke of York, whom the king had imprisoned; avowed his obligations to him, and that if it had not been for his good counsel, both the prince and his army would have often been in great perils and desolations<sup>18</sup>. In 1410 he was appointed warden of the Cinque Ports, and captain of Calais.

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These high appointments and acknowledged services imply early and active talents, popular reputation, and military diligence. But, although sometimes expressed plainly, sometimes rhetorically, and always with a friendly generalization which obscures and diminishes what the writers wished perhaps to have forgotten, yet that dissolute habits and unbecoming irregularities in his private life accompanied his laudable public conduct cannot be doubted, after reading the various passages of all the contemporary chronicles, in which they are expressed or implied<sup>19</sup>. Tradition ought certainly to be kept distinct from history; and we may allow Shakspeare's scenes to be but the creations of the poet, supplying and superseding from popular tales the scanty and vague phrases of the chroniclers. With these remarks we may dismiss a subject on which no satisfactory evidence can now be attained, either to confirm or refute the traditionary stories<sup>20</sup>. It is unfair to distinguished merit, to dwell on the blemishes which it has regretted and reformed; and no prince can on this ground claim greater liberality than Harry of Monmouth. Whatever irregularities he may, from a too early initiation into military life, have stooped to practise between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five,

His imputed  
errors.

<sup>18</sup> Plac. Parl. 611.—On the other notices of the prince in the Parliamentary Records, see Luders' Essay, 62—71.

<sup>19</sup> Elmham, Livius, Otterburn, Hardyng, Walsingham, all allude to them.

<sup>20</sup> M. Luders has taken some pains to clear the prince from the traditionary imputations,

and to lessen the effect of the historical censures. His facts and dates, from the Parliamentary Records, and Rymer's *Fœdera*, deserve attention; but his reasoning is not always so convincing as some of his authorities.

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five, they were with rare self-command shaken off when higher duties called for nobler conduct. That his father's death greatly affected him ; that he afterwards lamented the loss of an intelligent parent in the prime of mature life, who had so often treated him with high respect and confidence ; that he reviewed and confessed the errors of his own ungoverned youth<sup>21</sup>, which had given that father pain, and lessened his own respectability ; that now, becoming a king, his lofty soul felt the intellectual dignity and sublime duties of his station ; and that, aspiring to merit and compel the praise instead of the censure of mankind, he should resolve to make his future conduct as noble as his great office, and therefore, as one contemporary says, to let no virtue pass by him without attempting to transfer it into himself<sup>22</sup>—these circumstances, and his firm and persevering execution of his exalted purpose<sup>23</sup>, are entitled to our admiration ; and, though rare, are not incredible. Nor ought the glory reaped at Agincourt, to throw them into oblivion. Many have conquered apparent impossibilities in the field of battle. Few princes have so magnanimously conquered and amended themselves.

His attachment to literature.

That he was fond of music, his biographers declare<sup>24</sup>. We have also the evidence of the poets, whom he patronized, that he loved literature, and encouraged it. He delighted to read books of antiquity<sup>25</sup>. He requested Lydgate to translate the Destruction of Troy, because he wished the noble story to be known generally to high

<sup>21</sup> See Elmham, c. 7. Livius, p. 5. Pol. Virg. p. 439.

<sup>22</sup> Otterburn, p. 273.

<sup>23</sup> The assertions of his reformation are so express, that the fact cannot be justly questioned, without doubting all history ; and if there were reformation, there must have been previous errors.

<sup>24</sup> "Musicis delectabatur." Tit. Liv. p. 5.

"Instrumentis organicis plurimum deditus." Elmham.

<sup>25</sup> So Lydgate states in the introduction to his poem on the Wars of Troy, which has been printed, speaking of the prince,

Bycause he hath joye and gret deynte  
To rede in bokys of antiquite.



high and low<sup>26</sup>. His desire of the praise of true knighthood, led him to study the worthiness and the prowess of old chivalry<sup>27</sup>. To avoid the vice of sloth and idleness, he employed himself in exercising his body in martial plays, according to the instructions of Vegetius<sup>28</sup>. He was also one of the patrons of the poet Occleve, who addresses to him, while he was prince, two of his poems<sup>29</sup>. Occleve describes himself as advised to select some subject that would

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<sup>26</sup> Henry, the worthy prynce of Wales,  
Whyche me comaunded the drery pitious fate  
Of hem of Troye in Englyshe to translate—  
So as I coude and write it for his sake;  
By cause he wolde, that to hyge and lowe,  
The noble story openly were knowe.

Lydgate, Wars of Troy.

Lydgate says he began his translation in the fourteenth year of Henry the Fourth's reign.

<sup>27</sup> For to obeie withoute variaunce  
My lordes byddyng fully and plesaunce  
Whiche hath desire, sothly for to seyn,  
Of verray knyghthood, to remember ageyn  
The worthyness, gif I shal nat lye,  
And the prowesse of olde chivalrie.—Lydgate, Ib.

<sup>28</sup> - - - - and also for to eschewe  
The cursed vice of slouthe and ydelnesse  
So he enjoyeth in vertuous besynesse,  
In all that longeth to manhood, dar i seyn,  
He besyeth evere, and therto is so fayn  
To hawnte his body in pleies marcial,  
Thorug exercise to chide slouthe at all  
After the doctrine of Vygetious.  
Thus is he both manful and vertuous.—Lydg. Ib.

<sup>29</sup> In one, Occleve says—  
Hye and noble prynce excellent!  
My lord, the prynce! O my lord gracious!  
I, humble servaunt and obedient  
Unto your estate, hye and glorious,  
Of whiche I am full tendir and full jelous,  
Me recomaunde unto your worthynesse,  
With hert entier, and spirite of mekenesse.

MS. Bib. Reg. 17 D 6.

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would be beneficial to Henry<sup>30</sup>. A book on government is the subject adopted. He suggests respectfully to the prince, that it may be useful to read of an evening in his chamber<sup>31</sup>. He looks forward to the hope, that his kingly dignity may benefit his people and advance his own praise<sup>32</sup>. He reminds him of the responsibility of that exalted station<sup>33</sup>; of the necessity of himself observing the laws<sup>34</sup>; that the vox populi is the vox Dei<sup>35</sup>; and that courage should be united with prudence<sup>36</sup>. He exhorts him to set the example

<sup>30</sup> Wrote to him nothing that sowneth to vice—  
Loke yf thou fynde kanst ony trefte,  
Grounded on his estates holsomnesse;  
Suche thyng translate and unto his hynesse,  
As humbly as that thou kanst presente.  
Do this my sone. Fader! I assente.

Occleve, MS. Bib. Reg. 17 D 6.

<sup>31</sup> To the prince he writes,  
And although it be no maner of nede  
You to counseile what to done or leve;  
Yf that you liste of stories to take hede,  
Somewhat it may profite, by your leve.  
At hardest, whan ye ben in chambre at eve,  
They ben goode to drive forth the nyght.  
They shull not harme yf they be herd aryght.—MS. Ib.

<sup>32</sup> Now, gracious prynce, agayn that the corone  
Honoure you shall with roial dignitee;  
Beseche I hym that sitte on hye in trone,  
That whan that charge receyved han ye,  
Such governaunce men may fele and see  
In you, as may be to his plesauce,  
Profite to us, and your goode loos avaunce.—MS. Ib.

<sup>33</sup> First and foreward the dignitee of a kyng  
Impressed in the botme of your mynde,  
Consideryng how chargeable a thyng  
That office is— MS. Ib.

<sup>34</sup> Prince excellent! have your lawes in chere;  
Observe hem; and offende hem by no wey.—MS. Ib.

<sup>35</sup> This, my gode lord, wynneth peples voice,  
For peples voice is Goddes voice men sayn.—MS. Ib.

<sup>36</sup> O worthy prynce! I trust in your manhode  
Meddled with prudence and discrecion,  
That ye shall make many a knightly rode,  
And the pride of our foes threshe adoun.  
Manhode and witte conqueren hye renoun.  
And whoso lakketh eny of the tweyn,  
Of armes wanteth the bridell and the reyn.—MS. Ib.



example of good faith and magnanimity; to avoid falsehood, cruelty, flatterers, prodigality and avarice; and to love and cultivate peace<sup>37</sup>. Occleve addresses him with expressions that imply affection as well as respect<sup>38</sup>, and inserts a remembrance of his master Chaucer, which does honour to his feeling and gratitude<sup>39</sup>.

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That the prince possessed a soul soaring above the common level of mankind, appeared in many incidents of his life, and in none more than in his behaviour to the chief justice of the king's bench. Henry insisting on the release of one of his servants, who had been arraigned for felony, the judge commanded him, upon his allegiance, to leave the prisoner and depart. In a rage at this public rebuke, he rushed on the judge with his sword. The undaunted magistrate calmly said, "Sir! remember yourself. I keep here the place of your sovereign lord and father, to whom you owe double obedience; wherefore, in his name, I charge you to desist from your wilfulness and unlawful enterprise, and from henceforth give good example to those who hereafter shall be your proper subjects. And now for your contempt and disobedience, go you to the prison of the king's bench, whereunto I commit you,

Incident  
with the  
chief justice.

<sup>37</sup> On these topics he expatiates with much good sense, inserting occasional examples from history, in illustration of his observations.

<sup>38</sup> Though that my livelode and possession  
Be skant, I riche am of benevolence  
To you. Thereof kan I be no nygon.  
Goode have I none, by whiche your excellence  
May plesed be; and, for myne impotence  
Stoppeth the way to do as I were holde.  
I write as he that your goode lyfe fayne wolde.—Occ. MS. Ib.

<sup>39</sup> Symple is my gost, and scarce my lettrure,  
Unto your excellence for to write  
Myne inward love; and yet in aventure  
Wole I me putte, though I can but lite.  
My dere Maister—God his soule quyte.  
And fader—Chaucer—fayne wold me han taught.  
But I was dulle, and lerned right nought.—Occ. MS. Ib.

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you, and remain there prisoner until the pleasure of the king your father be further known.”—Impressed by this firm and well reasoned address, the prince laid his weapon aside, did reverence to the steady and upright judge, and with true magnanimity of mind went submissively to the king’s bench as he was commanded. With eager haste his attendants stated to the king the indignity put upon his son ; but the judicious parent duly comprehended the greatness of character which both the prince and the judge had displayed. With thankful gladness he raised his eyes and hands to heaven, exclaiming, “ How much am I bound to your infinite goodness, O merciful God ! for having given me a judge who feareth not to minister justice, and a son who can thus nobly submit to obey it<sup>40</sup>.”

Difference  
with his  
father.

The tendency of the imperfect intimations which exist in the ancient documents on the subject is, that some misunderstanding occurred between this prince and his father, in his latter days, although the cause of the difference is obscure. It is difficult to credit the strange scene usually annexed to this event<sup>41</sup>, because there seems no reason for the prince’s uncouth dress, nor in his presenting his father with a dagger to kill him, which he was sure his parent would not do ; and still less in coming for such a purpose with a large company of noblemen, or for chusing the time of his father’s sickness, to agitate him with such a conference. The advice which the dying king is stated to have addressed to him, has not the sanction of any contemporary authority that has come down to us. If it has not been invented by subsequent chroniclers<sup>42</sup>, it has been taken from documents that have since disappeared.

That

<sup>40</sup> Sir Thomas Eliot, in his “ Governor,” addressed to Henry VIII. has narrated this pleasing incident. M. Luders, who quotes the passage at length, 79—82, has properly remarked on the unauthorized additions of

the blow and ill company, which even sir Edward Coke has appended to it.

<sup>41</sup> See the detail in Hollingshed and Stowe’s Chronicles.

<sup>42</sup> The reader may be pleased to have a specimen



That on acceding to the crown he banished from his court the young noblemen with whom he had formerly associated, thus avoiding the rock on which Richard II. had been wrecked, has been stated, and is not improbable;—that he paid the tribute of grateful affection to Richard, who had knighted him, by having his body brought in state to Westminster, and honourably buried<sup>43</sup>, was an incident expressive of that elevation of character which marked his kingly conduct.

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Introduced to war so early by his father—aware, from his self-experience, of the necessity of giving a little-educated and turbulent nobility some greater subject of activity than the habits of their ordinary life supplied—and fond of partaking of the fame that has too lavishly been given to martial deeds—he soon renewed his claim to the crown of France, and gave the national mind its favourite employment of a war with France. The state which that country exhibited, presented indeed a temptation to English ambition, which an enterprising spirit, taught to consider battles as the noblest work of life, could scarcely be expected to resist.

Projects a  
war with  
France.

Notwithstanding the hostilities of the king of Navarre, of the  
Jacquerie

State of  
France.

specimen of it:—"Thou shalt be exalted unto the crowne for the wealth and conservation of the realme, and not for thy singular commodity and avail. My sonne, thou shalt be a minister to thy realme, to keep it in tranquillity and defend it. Like as the heart in the midst of the body is principall and chiefe thing in the body, so, my sonne, thou shalt be amongst thy people as chiefe and principall of them to minister, imagine and acquire those things that may be most beneficiall for them. And then thy people shall be obedient to thee, to ayde and succour thee, and in all things to accomplish thy commandements, like as thy members labour every one of them in his office, to acquire and get that thing that thy heart desireth: and as thy heart is of no force and impotent

without the ayde of thy members, so without thy people thy raigne is nothing. My sonne, thou shalt feare and dread God above all things, and thou shalt love honour and worshippe him with all thy heart; thou shalt attribute and ascribe to him all things whereia thou seest thyself to be well fortunate, be it victorie of thy enemies, love of thy friends, obedience of thy subjects, strength and activeness of body, honour riches or fruitful generations, or any other thing whatsoever it shall be that chanceth to thy pleasure. Thou shalt not imagine that any such thing should fortune unto thee, by thine act, nor by thy desert; but thou shalt thinke that all cometh only of the goodnesse of the Lord." Stowe's Chron. p. 341.

<sup>43</sup> Mon. Croy. Gale's Script. vol. 1. p. 499.

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Jacquerie rebellion of the French peasantry, and of the factious demagogues at Paris, Charles v. had succeeded in disappointing the ambition of Edward III. and died in 1380, leaving France still agitated with interior dissensions, but recovered from the hands of its English conquerors<sup>44</sup>.

On his death, thirty-six princes of the blood, who were then alive in France, instead of being the support of the kingdom, from their unity and patriotism, became its scourge by their divisions. Each of these princes had his partisans and creatures. The whole nation followed their example, and subdivided itself into factions of every sort. The uncle of Charles VI. who governed the kingdom in his name during his minority, contributed to its ruin; he multiplied the imposts, and pressed down the people by their weight. The treasures collected by Charles v. were dissipated. Every prince of the blood availed himself of the opportunities that presented themselves, of abusing his power, and gratifying his personal resentments.

At length Charles VI. attained his legal age of sovereignty, and assumed the helm of government. The hope of a happy and peaceable reign delighted the nation. He was naturally good and benevolent, and loved his people. In grateful return they called him "The well-beloved;" an applausive title, of which his disastrous reign has not deprived him. But he became unhappily afflicted with a mental derangement. Intrigues and factions then burst out on all sides. Every prince aimed at seizing the supreme authority. The power of the disabled sovereign was little else than a name; anarchy, and corruption of manners, spread over the country<sup>45</sup>.

The

<sup>44</sup> On the state and trouble of France, from the turbulence of the king of Navarre, and the factions that ensued, the summary of M. Lecousse's *Memoirs*, published in the *Hist. de l'Acad. Inscr.* vol. 8. pp. 329—373, may be profitably perused.

<sup>45</sup> I take this concise view of the history of France at this period, from the able Summary prefixed to the *Memoirs du Pierre de Fenin*, pp. 310—317.



The two chief parties that divided France were respectively led by the duke of Orleans, the king's brother, and by the duke of Burgundy, his uncle. In 1403 Burgundy died, and his son John Sans-peur succeeded to the command of his party, which the people favoured. He was of the same age with Orleans: and these two young rivals, full of ambition and impetuosity, distracted France by their fierce competition. The queen attached herself to Orleans. Their differences assumed the shape of actual war. A reconciliation followed; they swore mutual amity; and a few days afterwards, Orleans was assassinated by the orders or with the privity of the duke of Burgundy<sup>46</sup>. The latter, indeed, did not affect to deny his participation. He fled to Flanders to his brother-in-law, the duke of Holland, and in 1410 commenced war against Orleans and his party, who were called the Armagnacs. A small body of English assisted him in these hostilities<sup>47</sup>.

Burgundy reached Paris, and got possession of the king. In 1411, peace was again made between the rival factions, and Orleans pardoned him for the murder of his father. In 1413, the French nobility endeavoured to dispossess him of the government; he resisted them; the populace of Paris supported him; the king was taken from him; and another civil war ensued. It was terminated by an apparent peace, but all the spirit and causes of dissension and rivalry remained<sup>48</sup>.

It was at this period, so inviting to a foreign enemy, that Henry V. determined on renewing his claim to the crown of France, and of invading that country. Much fencing negociation followed<sup>49</sup>. The English parliament and nation applauded his project as soon as

they

<sup>46</sup> Pierre du Fenin, who was prevost of Arras, and died in 1433, and whose Memoirs are esteemed as those of an honest man, though favouring the party of Burgundy, says of this catastrophe, "Par la connoissance du duc Jean de Burgogne, il fit tuer le dit duc d'Orleans." p. 331.

<sup>47</sup> Pierre du Fenin, p. 347.

<sup>48</sup> Ib. 349—378.

<sup>49</sup> See this detailed in Rymer's *Fœdera*, and in Rapin's *History of England*, and *Abrégé* of Rymer.

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they were urged to it, and a large force was assembled at Southampton. His embassy to France, claiming his right, and threatening war if it were refused, was ineffectual<sup>49</sup>. If the young dauphin of France sent him the puerile insult of the tennis balls<sup>50</sup>, it could only arise from the misconception of his character, which his youthful irregularities had occasioned. But Henry was from policy and sentiment too earnestly bent on the expedition, to need that additional excitation. The ambassadors who afterwards arrived from France, on finding the English seriously preparing to invade, displayed no qualities likely to conciliate the two countries<sup>51</sup>; and the king was about to sail from Southampton with his fleet, when a strange conspiracy of three noblemen endangered and astonished him; one was his bosom friend and favourite counsellor, Henry le Scrop; another, the brother of his kinsman the duke of York, whom he had created an earl, and enriched with various grants; the third, was sir Thomas Grey, a northern knight. The king wept at the discovery of their treason. Their lives were forfeited to the law, but he remitted the usual consequences of such a conviction. The popular belief referred the plot to corruption by French bribes<sup>52</sup>. It may have sprung from the resisting spirit which Henry's religious persecutions occasioned.

Henry in-  
vades France.

The king reached Normandy with a fleet, from 1000 to 1500 in number, and laid seige to Harfleur. It was strongly fortified according to the mode then in use, but it yielded to the king's artillery and persevering attacks, in thirty-eight days<sup>53</sup>. The free use of autumnal fruit, the chilliness of the nights, and the exhalations

<sup>49</sup> Tit. Liv. p. 6.

<sup>50</sup> Otterbourne mentions this incident, p. 275; and the Monk of Croyland, p. 500. The king's answer was, that he would return him some London balls, which should knock his houses about his ears.

<sup>51</sup> One of these was the archbishop of Sens,

whom Walsingham describes as a "vir verbosus et arrogans sed parum disciplinatus." p. 434.

<sup>52</sup> Wals. 435. Tit. Liv. 8.

<sup>53</sup> Tit. Liv. pp. 8—11. Elm. pp. 40—46. Wals. 438.



exhalations of the unburied animals that were killed in the camp, afflicted the army with a dysentery during the siege, which destroyed the largest part both of its commanders and soldiers. In this attenuated state, the king thought it necessary to hold a council of war, to deliberate on his ulterior measures. His brother Clarence expressed the dictates of prudence, in recommending them to re-embark, and return to England<sup>54</sup>. But to the king's heroic mind, even wisdom was unpalatable. He preferred danger to disgrace. The recollection of the triumph which his retreat would afford to his enemies, who had already personally taunted him, was a mortification to which even death seemed a less evil. To march by land to Calais would be an act of superior courage; and he declared that he would rather dare every peril, than let his rivals say that he had fled from his inheritance through fear. His gallant countrymen sympathized with his feelings, and adopted his determination. The spirit of daring valour, defying the calculation of probabilities, sprang up in all; and, 2000 men being left to garrison Harfleur, and their spoils and prisoners sent to England<sup>55</sup>, they began their adventurous march with a small army, weakened by continuing disease, and ill supplied even with the necessary provisions. A more desperate enterprise has seldom been attempted.

As heroism in its most determined shape was the actuating principle of the king's mind in this march, he purposely made it slow, firm, and direct. He neither attempted any manœuvres to mislead his foes, nor any celerity of movement to outstrip them<sup>56</sup>. A sincere, though erring persuasion, that he had a right to the crown of France, an ardent desire of accomplishing some great action, or at least of attempting one, and a sublime confidence in Providence for the result, pervaded his resolute mind; and with a calm

<sup>54</sup> Tit. Liv. 12.<sup>55</sup> With the duke of Clarence. Monstrelet, vol. 1. p. 162.<sup>56</sup> Tit. Liv. 12.

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HENRY V.His march  
to Calais.

calm intrepidity and a self-possession never surpassed, he prepared to meet the chances.

The French princes, suspending their feuds, assembled a powerful force to overwhelm him. The disease and privations which the English army were suffering became generally known, and great numbers crowded to the French standard to destroy the invaders. Henry advanced straight to Eu, a sea-port town, which after a sharp contest he took <sup>57</sup>, and from thence proceeding to the Somme, reached Blanchetaque, the place where Edward III. had found and forced a passage before the battle of Cressy, but which the French had now so strongly fortified by sharp thick pales, and so vigilantly guarded, that Henry declined attempting it. He marched along the river to other bridges and fords, but found them too well defended to be forced. The constable of France, and the admiral, the duke of Alençon, with the flower of the French chivalry, had now reached Abbeville, and spread themselves from Corbie to Peronne, to guard all the passages of the river. Henry advanced to Amiens, watching and exploring a favourable hour and place of crossing it <sup>58</sup>. He repulsed an attack from Amiens and Corbie, and at last obtained his wish at a ford near Bethencourt, which the troops from St. Quentin were negligent in guarding <sup>59</sup>. The French fell back to Bapaume and its vicinity, and from thence to St. Pol <sup>60</sup>.

The French assembled a council, attended by the king, the dukes of Berry and Bretagne, and thirty-five other chieftains. Thirty decided for an immediate battle with the English; five advised delay. The king ordered the constable of France to prepare for the engagement <sup>61</sup>; and three heralds were sent to Henry,

<sup>57</sup> Monstrelet, 167. Elmham, 52. Tit. Liv. 13.

<sup>58</sup> Monstrelet, 167. Pierre du Fen. 379.

<sup>59</sup> Tit. Liv. 13. Elm. 53. Monst. 167.

<sup>60</sup> Monst. Pierre Fenin.

<sup>61</sup> Monst. 167.



Henry, ostentatiously announcing their intention to give him battle. He heard them with unaltered countenance and unruffled temper, and mildly answered, "Be the event then as it pleases God." The Frenchmen had the assurance to ask him, which would be his line of march; and the king, with an unfearing sincerity that in such a crisis has rarely been practised, replied, "Straight on to Calais. If our enemies attempt to obstruct us, they shall not do it without experiencing some mischief and danger. We shall not seek them, but neither will we make any movement to avoid them. We exhort them not to stop our way, if they wish to avoid the shedding of much Christian blood." He presented the heralds with a hundred crowns of gold coin, and dismissed them<sup>62</sup>.

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Informed that if the bridge of the river which he now approached was broken, it would be difficult to pass the stream, he directed some noblemen and knights to keep possession of it. They repulsed all the efforts of the French to retake it, and the whole English force passed over to the farther bank. The duke of York, whom the king had appointed to the chief command, having sent out persons to explore all the neighbouring places, ascended the summit of a hill to make his own survey. He was soon reached by a breathless messenger, who assured him that the French, to an amount which he could not number, were advancing. This report being confirmed by others<sup>63</sup>, was communicated to the king: He heard it with an undisturbed serenity, ordered the army to halt, and, spurring his horse, went himself to observe his enemies. He saw them from the mountain, marching in large bodies to get before him to Agincourt, and spreading over the country like a mighty

<sup>62</sup> Tit. Liv. p. 14. Elmh. 55.

<sup>63</sup> One of the reconnoitring officers was David Gam, a Welsh captain, whose report breathed the spirit of the English army:

'There are enough to be killed, enough to be taken prisoners, and enough to run away.' Powel. Hist. Wales.

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mighty forest. He returned to his own columns with the unshaken equanimity of a mind that, believing the issue to be in the disposal of Heaven alone, calmly waited for its decision. He collected his army, formed it, and gave to every leader his due place and order of fighting; and he kept them in the field till the evening. The autumnal night was very dark, but he ordered each man to rest as well as he could where he was placed. A village was found out, from which they got better food than they had been able to obtain for several days; and a little hut was the king's temporary shelter<sup>64</sup>. This village, called Maisoncelles, was about three flights of an arrow from the position of the French, who, eager to intercept the English, had hastened their march to Agincourt, through which the road lay to Calais. The numbers of the two armies were unusually disproportionate<sup>65</sup>.

The night was passed in silence and earnest devotion in the English camp. Every one contemplated the morrow with an awful solemnity.

<sup>64</sup> Tit. Liv. p. 15. Elm. 56—58. Monstrelet, 163.

<sup>65</sup> These numbers are differently stated. Hardyng, who was in the battle, makes the French 100,000, and the English 9000:—

The nobles there of France afore him - -  
Proudly battailed with an hundred thousand in arraie—

He sette on theim and with theim fought full sore

With nyne thousand, no more with him thore.—p. 375.

Monstrelet says the French were 150,000, “fussent bien cent cinquante mille chevaliers,” p. 163; and that Henry left Harfleur with 2000 men at arms, about 13,000 archers, and with a great number of other persons. p. 162. He mentions afterwards, that the French were six times as numerous as the English; “Six fois autant.” p. 163. The letter written by the king's lieutenant at Calais, on the 7th October, states, that

the king would have to give battle in fifteen days; that the French were assembling their troops, and would amount to above 100,000 men. Rym. Act. Fœd. vol. 9 p. 314. Walsingham states, with “ut fertur,” the English at 8000 and the French at 140,000. p. 438. The modern French writers naturally wish to lessen the disproportion; and therefore Mezeray makes the French only four times more numerous, and Daniel but three times. These are gratuitous suppositions. The oldest accounts are the most genuine; and of these, if we take Monstrelet's account, who, as a Frenchman, cannot have intended to favour the English, that the French were six times as numerous, we shall probably approach the truth. Hence, if the French numbered 100,000, the English were about 16,000; or if, as he says, the French amounted to 150,000, the English may be taken at 25,000. The ratio of the disproportion being settled, the respective numbers are immaterial.



solemnity. The resolution to exert themselves to their last breath for their own preservation and honour, was universal; but their state of weakness, from disease and suffering, and the vast superiority of the enemy, forbad much hope. The remembrance of the triumph of Poitiers must have cheered them; but as the French had lost that battle from bad conduct, it might operate to make their present dispositions more effective. The prevailing feeling was a devout trust in Providence, and a complacent firmness imbibed from the cool and steady intrepidity and constancy visible in their sovereign, who pervaded every part that he might infuse his own resolution and energy in all. The French rested about two hundred and fifty yards off the English. The fires in their tents and fields diminished the darkness by their frequent blaze; and the moon, rising to her zenith over both hosts in the middle of the night, diffused an illumination around, which enabled Henry to note the positions of the French, and by them to regulate his own <sup>66</sup>.

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At dawn he had mattins and the mass chanted in his army. He stationed all the horses and baggage in the village, under such small guard as he could spare, having resolved to fight the battle on foot. He sagaciously perceived that his only chance of victory rested in the superiority of the personal fortitude and activity of his countrymen; and to bring them face to face and arm to arm with their opponents, was the simple object of his tactical dispositions. He formed his troops into three divisions, with two wings. The centre, in which he stationed himself, he planted to act against the main body of the French; and he placed the right and left divisions, with their wings, at a small distance only from himself. He so chose his ground, that the village protected his rear, and hedges and briars defended his flanks.

Battle of  
Agincourt;  
25 Oct. 1415.

Determined

<sup>66</sup> Tit. Liv. 15, 16. Elmh. 59.

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Determined to shun no danger, but to be a conspicuous example to his troops on a day when no individual exertions could be spared, he put on a neat and shining armour, with a large and brilliant helmet, and on this he placed a crown radiant with its jewels, and he put over him a tunic adorned with the arms of France and England<sup>67</sup>. He mounted a horse, and proceeded to address his troops. It happened that he heard some one expressing a wish that every good knight in England were but with them that morning, and he seized the remark as the foundation of an animated address: "I do not wish that one man should be added to my army. We are indeed but few, compared with our enemy; but from this superiority, if God gives us the victory which we hope for, it will be from him alone that we receive it. From him, then, let us expect it. Should he for our sins deliver us to the swords of our foes, the less injury will happen to our country from our loss. Be brave and constant, and fight with all your strength. God, and the justice of our cause, will help us: He will deliver all this boasting multitude into our hands. And let every one who this day is conspicuous for his bodily armour, excel also his fellows in the superior fortitude and gallant daring of his mind<sup>68</sup>."

The French were commanded by the constable of France; and with him were the dukes of Orleans, Burgundy, Berry, and Alençon; the marshal and admiral of France, and a great assemblage of French nobility, who armed themselves and prepared for the field. Their force was divided into three great battalions, and continued formed till ten o'clock in the morning, not advancing to the attack, but pleasing themselves with the assurance that, from their vast superiority, the English could not escape out of their hands.

<sup>67</sup> Tit. Liv. 16. Elm. 60, 61.—The arms planted in an azure field, and three gold flowers leopard's in a purple one. p. 61.

<sup>68</sup> Tit. Liv. 17. Elmh. 61, 62.



hands<sup>69</sup>. The honour of taking prisoner an English king seemed so certain, that many of their noblest princes came without their troops or banners to partake of the undoubted glory<sup>70</sup>. The French were so numerous as to be able to draw up thirty deep; the English but four. A thousand speared horsemen skirmished from each of the horns of the enemy's line, and it appeared crowded with balistæ for the projection of stones of all sizes on Henry's little army. The French found that the ground would not allow them to bring their whole force at once upon the English. Their banners seemed more numerous than the English lances<sup>71</sup>. As they did not attack, the English refreshed themselves with food. The king observing that a great part of the day had passed without an encounter, consulted with his chief leaders. It was the general opinion, that, from their want of provisions and their other difficulties, a battle must be forced. The king applauded the decision, and resolved to be himself the assailant. It is probable that the French, recollecting that the victory of Poitiers was gained by the strength of the English position, and their own injudicious mode of attack, were averse to commit themselves now by an imprudent advance. The plain being wet and muddy, they wanted to see the English embarrassed by moving over it<sup>72</sup>.

Henry sent a part of his force behind the village of Agincourt, where the French had placed no men at arms. He moved from the rear of his army, unperceived, two hundred archers, to hide themselves in a meadow on the flank of the French advanced line. An old and experienced knight, sir Thomas Erpingham, formed the rest into battle-array for an attack, putting the archers in front, and the men at arms behind. The archers had each a sharp stake pointed at both ends, to use against the French horse. Sir Thomas,

<sup>69</sup> Monstrelet, 163.

<sup>70</sup> Tit. Liv. 17. Wals. says the French boasted that they would give quarter to none but the king and his lords. p. 438.

<sup>71</sup> Elm. 63.

<sup>72</sup> Wals. 438.

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Thomas, having completed his formation, threw up his truncheon in the air, and dismounted. The king and all the others on horseback in like manner took their stations on the ground. A general shout then burst from the English line, which startled the French<sup>73</sup>. Henry commanded them to kneel while a prayer was uttered; to throw all incumbrances behind them, and to take a particle of the earth in their mouths. He set an adjoining priory on fire, to distract and frighten the French, and then gave the word of attack, "Banners, advance!" Instantly the trumpets echoed through the plain, and every soldier moved alertly to his duty. The French seeing them advance, put themselves in motion. The English paused a moment, to take breath; and the first shock took place within twenty yards of the village. The French were formed into a crescent, with extending flanks, ready to surround, if the ground or occasion should permit. The charge of their cavalry might have broken the English line, but that the archers resolutely planted their stakes, kept them firmly pointed towards their adversaries, retired a little behind them, and with steady aim pointing their arrows, and discharging their powerful bows with all the vigour of their muscular arms, laid the bravest of their assailants at their feet<sup>74</sup>. Such was the force of the projection, and the weight and certainty of the direction, that no arrow fell ineffectually. New flights were sent with equal strength and skill, so rapidly, that the French knights fell in numbers which confused the survivors. Their horses, rendered furious and unmanageable from their wounds, rushed back upon their own army and shunned the battle. Again the English raised a shout of triumph. The alarm, and scattering cavalry, shook the French lines. New discharges of the feathered artillery were sent into their thickest masses, before they could recover from the consternation that

<sup>73</sup> Monstrelet, 163, 164.

<sup>74</sup> Tit. Liv. Elmh.



that the repulse of their cavalry was creating. The dead fell in various parts fifty or sixty in a heap<sup>75</sup>. The French, frightened by the effect of the arrows, bent their heads, to prevent them from entering the visors of their helmets; and, pressing forward too eagerly to escape them, they became so wedged together, that they could not raise their arms to strike at their opponents. The English seeing the whole first division of the French in disorder, threw back their bows, and, grasping their swords, battle-axes, and other manual weapons, rushed intrepidly upon them with such destruction, that, mowing down the ranks of the main body, they soon cut their way to the second line<sup>76</sup>. At this period, the ambushed archers rushed out, and poured their impetuous and irresistible arrows into the centre of the assailed force, which, having thus to resist the unexpected attacks from their flanks, as well as the dreadful onset in their front, lost all the advantage of their numbers and all confidence in themselves, and fell in every part before their more vigorous, skilful, and active antagonists. The spirit of the French, always greater than their bodily powers, quailed as the slaughter spread. The struggle lasted for three hours. No Englishman thought of plunder. All fought for victory. No prisoner was taken while the event was undecided. It was a Roman battle, hand to hand and foot to foot; and therefore the superior muscular force, mental constancy, and continuing energy of the English soldiers, overpowering the valour and fury of the French, at last won the hard-contested day. Reduced to a personal combat of man to man, the French found their inferiority in every part; and in their multiplied losses abandoned the hope of victory. The destruction and dispersion of their second line spread a panic through their third division<sup>77</sup>, which, if it had been brave and firm, might have still wrested the laurel from the English warriors,

now

<sup>75</sup> Wals. 439.<sup>76</sup> Monst. 164.<sup>77</sup> Monst.

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The king's  
personal  
danger.

now becoming fatigued by their great exertions. But every part successively gave way, and the English had only to kill and take prisoners.

The king was every where the foremost, daring every peril, and exhibiting a prowess that electrified and surprised his friends. At one moment he was in imminent danger. Eighteen French gentlemen agreed together to single him out, and to kill him, or perish. They got so near him, that one of them struck him so furiously upon his crest, that the blow made him fall upon his knees<sup>78</sup>. But the little confederated band were all destroyed. It was perhaps in this part of the contest that the Welsh commander, David Gam, and his two officers, fell, whom the king knighted for their bravery as they lay expiring upon the ground<sup>79</sup>. Henry was repeatedly struck upon his helmet and armour. In one desperate struggle, his brother the duke of Gloucester was felled senseless at his feet; the king immediately stood over him, repelled a long and furious attack to take him, and had the gratification to preserve his life<sup>80</sup>.

The duke d'Alençon distinguished himself by equal valour. He penetrated through the English force by his impetuous charge, till he reached the king. He struck down the duke of York. The king stooped down to raise him; and in that posture d'Alençon discharged a blow with his battle-axe on Henry's crown, which struck off a part of it. The brave duke was soon surrounded, and his retreat cut off. Perceiving his situation, he stretched out his hand to the king, and exclaimed, "I am the duke of Alençon; I yield myself to you." But as the king was about to receive his submission, he was killed by those who had rushed forwards against him. The marshal of France was coming up into the battle,

<sup>78</sup> Lefevre, who was engaged in the battle, mentions this circumstance.

<sup>79</sup> Powell's History of Wales.

<sup>80</sup> Tit. Liv. Elmh.



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battle, when, seeing the many wounded; the masses flying in all directions, and that all the great lords were killed or taken; and finding it impossible to make any effectual rally, he retreated to the king of France at Rouen<sup>81</sup>. The victory was now complete.

But at this critical moment, tidings were brought to the king, that the French had recovered themselves, were attacking his rear, and had taken his baggage. Henry, alarmed at the information, which threatened a new conflict, more dangerous from the fatigued state of his men, and seeing the French still in great numbers, though in retreat, on the plain, became apprehensive of a desperate rally, and ordered the prisoners taken to be put to the sword as the trumpets sounded, lest they should co-operate. This lamentable catastrophe took place before it was ascertained that the new attack had been chiefly made by a body of plundering peasantry<sup>82</sup>. The French historians candidly admit that this mistake, and not intentional cruelty, was the cause of this unhappy slaughter. It is perhaps some impeachment of that admirable self-possession which Henry had so nobly displayed; but the physical exhaustion of his mind and body at the close of such a conflict, may be admitted as his apology for a precipitate act of inhumanity into which the general excitation and alarm of his wearied, though conquering countrymen, combined to urge him. Before he left the field of battle, he returned thanks to Heaven for the wonderful victory. He called together the French and English heralds; he told them, he should not have had such a great success, if the sins of the French had not occasioned their disaster; and he inquired the name of the castle which he saw close to him; they told him "Agincourt." He remarked, that all battles ought to bear the name of the nearest fortress, and that this should be called the Battle of Agincourt. The English attempted no pursuit; but when

The pri-  
soners slain.<sup>81</sup> Monstrelet, 166.<sup>82</sup> Monst. 164. Tit. Liv. Elmh.

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the field of battle was cleared from all their opponents, the returned, with their wounded, to the village of Maisoncelles. The French wounded crawled as well as they were able to the neighbouring woods and villages. Such as were found next morning alive on the field, were either taken prisoners or killed; and the king with his remaining force, of which only three-fourths were on foot, proceeded to Calais<sup>83</sup>.

Reflections  
on the  
battle.

This remarkable battle was unlike those of Cressy and Poitiers, in the peculiar circumstance, that they were fought from necessity, and as the only means of escape; but the battle of Agincourt was deliberately and industriously sought by the king of England. He had taken Harfleur, and thus secured a point of entrance into Normandy when he pleased. Perceiving his army afflicted and thinned by disease, he had his choice, of remaining there till reinforcements arrived from England, or of garrisoning it as he did, and of sailing back to England, to renew the next Spring his invasion, with the advantage of commencing it from this important fortress.

<sup>83</sup> Monst. 164, 165.—I would rather state the loss on each side from Monstrelet. He says, that the French heralds, and others, who went to inter the dead, reckoned 10,000 French to have fallen. Sixteen hundred of these were "Varletz," all the rest were "Gentilzhommes." Among these, 120 banners were found. In the number of the killed were the constable of France, the admiral, the commanders of the king's household and bowmen; the princely Jukes of Brabant, Berry and Alençon, and their brothers, and a long list of nobility, which fill a chapter of Monstrelet. Among the prisoners, he enumerates the duke of Orleans, the duke of Bourbon, the marshal of France; the counts d'Eu, Vendosme, and Rochemont, and several seigneurs. He considers that about 1500 knights and esquires were taken. On the English loss his words are, "about 600 men

of all conditions were found dead upon the place," and the duke of York. pp. 165, 166. As Monstrelet so expressly declares that he had his account from those who visited the field of battle, I think it unnecessary to notice other estimations, except to mention that the small number of the English is stated by other Frenchmen. Pierre du Fenin makes it but 400 or 500. p. 384. Gaguin, who died in 1501, states 400 in his History of France, p. 197. Paulus Emilius, a native of Verona, who wrote the French history, and died 1529, makes the English loss only 200. p. 323. Thus every part of the affair was extraordinary—a battle of three hours, and the defeat of above 100,000 men by one-sixth of their number, with the loss, at the highest, of only 600 men!! Henry might well have the 'Non nobis' chanted.



fortress. He chose to send away his fleet, under his brother the duke of Clarence, to England, and to march by land through the territory of his enemies in open daring, without any attempt by manœuvres to elude, or by forced marches to outstrip them, and without any other object in view than to embark for England at Calais, instead of Harfleur. He made this determination with the full prospect of the whole force of the French nation bearing down upon him to intercept him; he expected it, and declared he should take no measures to avoid it. He set off without supplies for his army, with a debilitating disease pervading it, and with its daily reduction certain, from its malady and privations. His march was therefore a challenge to all France, to come and fight him and his sick, small, and suffering army. No fabled hero of romance ever tempted destruction more wilfully, or achieved a more extraordinary adventure. It was a march of the most calm, deliberate, determined, and self-devoted heroism that history has recorded. The battle was fought in the same spirit, and as miraculously won. We comprehend the defeat at Poitiers from the strength of the Black Prince's position, the sagacity with which he availed himself of all its advantages, and the unwise manner in which, contrary to their own military counsel, his antagonists had attacked it. But at Agincourt the French forbore to attack, because the ground was unfavourable; and the English were obliged to move out of their station and into the disadvantages, in order to be the assailants. They went to bury themselves, as it were, in the midst of a force six times their own number; and yet fought, beat, killed, captured or dispersed 100,000 or 150,000 men, supplied with every personal comfort, and with every means of annoyance. For the issue, we have endeavoured to account by the description of the conflict. But for Henry's motives thus to become an Amadis de Gaul or an Oroondates, we can give no

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other explanation than that mysterious impulse and confidence of mind which distinguish sublime genius; that aspiration for heroic fame, at every risk, which the feats of former days excite in such an intellect; and a fixed resolution to redeem the good opinion, and to compel the applause of mankind, which youthful errors had begun to forfeit. The insult of the tennis balls being evidence that his personal depreciation had been extended to France, may have made him dread, lest his sudden retreat should have increased it; and therefore he preferred the chance of death, with the reputation of at least attempting an enterprise of uncommon daring, to the certainty of the derision and contempt of those who had already taunted him, whom he came to conquer, but from whom he would have seemed to have fled. His audacious, but gallant march and battle, are therefore rather subjects for our romantic admiration, than for our sober praise or for any human imitation. The laurels of Cressy and Poitiers were those of valiant fortitude; exerting surprising prowess as the only means of safety. The laurel of Agincourt was the prize of temerity without necessity; of a chivalric defiance of danger, too much like ostentatious confidence to be safely commended; and was won, not only against calculation, but against all reasonable hope.

Henry  
returns to  
England.

Henry proceeded to Calais, and soon afterwards landed at Dover. He was received with such general enthusiasm, that the people waded through the sea to his ship, and took him in their arms, and carried him to land<sup>84</sup>. In London, at his entrance, the citizens displayed their proudest costume. The tapestry in which the valiant feats of his predecessors were woven, was every where displayed, because

none

<sup>84</sup> Tit. Liv. 22. Elmh. 71.—“The field of battle was crowded next day, by some, to find their lords and masters, by others, to pillage what the English had left, who had only taken away the gold, silver, precious garments, hauberks, and things of great

value. Hence the greatest part of the harness was found on the field; but the bodies were without clothing, because the peasantry and women of the villages about had stripped the greatest part of their linen and all their other dress.” Monst. p. 166.



none had transcended this victory. The aqueducts ran with wine. In the public streets towers were erected, adorned with the richest cloths, in which boys with pleasing voices were placed, singing his praise. The king ordered this part of the pageantry to cease. He referred his success to God alone; and would not even suffer the battered crown on his helmet to be publicly exhibited<sup>85</sup>.

It might have been expected that this great victory would have induced Henry to have sailed to France with the first breeze of the ensuing Spring, and to have struggled again for the throne he had claimed. But, as if to shew that personal honour had been his leading object, he remained at home nearly two years afterwards without any military movement<sup>86</sup>. The factions in France continuing, the duke of Burgundy sought to excite him to espouse his interests. This turbulent prince, disappointed in his hopes of possessing the French regency, if not the crown, at last, stimulated by revenge, entered into a treaty with Henry, in which he acknowledged him to be the real king of France, and did him homage accordingly<sup>87</sup>.

This seductive plan of additional greatness, inflamed Henry's mind with the ambition to secure it. He tried to interest the noble French prisoners still in England to support him; and the duke of Burgundy having published a strong manifesto against the royal administration at Paris, which had made itself unpopular, and

<sup>85</sup> Tit. Liv. 22. Elmh. 72.

<sup>86</sup> In 1416, the emperor of Germany, Sigismund, came from Paris into England. He affected to act as mediator between the two countries. He was made knight of the garter, and continued here during the summer. Wals. 441. He signed a treaty of alliance with Henry, and promised to assist him against France.

<sup>87</sup> On the subsequent transactions of Henry with France, the 9th and 10th volumes of

Rymer's *Fœdera* contain official papers which furnish the authentic detail. Rapin published a very satisfactory *Abrégé Historique* of this Work, to which I would refer the reader; and I take this opportunity of acknowledging that it has frequently assisted me as a valuable critical and historical index to the documents in Rymer. On this reign, it presents them to us interwoven with a connected narrative that will both instruct and please the historical student.

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HENRY V.

1417.  
Henry in-  
vades France  
again.

and having marched an army towards Paris, Henry embraced the opportunity of landing himself, at the end of July 1417, with 25,000 men in Normandy. The French government, occupied with opposing Burgundy, could not repress Henry's invasion. He took Caen, Bayeux, Mantes, Alençon, and Falaise. A conference for peace having ended fruitlessly, Henry continued his campaign in Normandy during the winter. The Pope interfered to pacify the two countries; but the constable of France, who governed it, defeated his mediation. The party of Burgundy afterwards becoming masters of Paris, massacred the constable and above 2000 of those attached to him; the duke then seized the government. Complicated negotiations, sometimes avowed, sometimes secret, ensued between him and Henry, and between the dauphin of France and Henry, and between the dauphin and Burgundy, each too much striving to overreach the other. The dauphin and Burgundy becoming more alarmed at England than at each other, surprised the world with intelligence of their reconciliation. Henry, indignant at their deceptions, attacked and took Pontoise, and published a declaration stating his grievances; reminding the nation, that he had now got, in the capture of Pontoise, the key of Paris, and renewing the demand of their compliance with his former offers, with the addition of the surrender of this city<sup>88</sup>.

The political state of France only became more stormy by the assassination of Burgundy by the dauphin. This crime, as foolish as abominable, threw the young duke of Burgundy into a close alliance with Henry, and revolted the best part of the nation against the dauphin. A treaty of peace with the English king now became inevitable, and it was concluded at Troyes the  
1st April

1420.  
Treaty of  
Troyes.

<sup>88</sup> The archbishop of Canterbury issued orders for prayers to be offered for Henry's success in this expedition, and for his *preservation* "from the superstitious operations of the necromancers; especially of those who are reported to be contriving for the destruction of his person." Wilk. Concilia, vol. 3. p. 393.



1st April 1420. By this treaty, Henry was to marry Catherine, the daughter of the French king; to be regent of France while Charles remained alive; and to succeed him to the crown on his demise<sup>89</sup>. Henry published an order to strike a coin with his new title, "Henricus Francorum Rex"<sup>90</sup>; was betrothed to Catherine at Troyes the 21st May, and was wedded to her the 2d of June; the English and French courts, united, went and laid siege to Sens; a sentence was issued against the murderers of the duke of Burgundy, in which Henry is called heir and regent of France<sup>91</sup>; and the king, returning to England, celebrated the coronation of his queen in the ensuing Lent. His parliament eagerly confirmed the treaty of Troyes, so glorious to England; and in the following year, as the dauphin had found Frenchmen enough to support him, from their aversion to a foreign sovereign, to keep Paris in a sort of blockade, Henry went to France in June with his queen. His arrival freed its metropolis from all danger. In August he marched against the dauphin, and took Dreux. A dysentery in his army suspended awhile his operations. In October he renewed them, obtained possession of Meaux, and began treating with the emperor for the purchase of the duchy of Luxemburg<sup>92</sup>. The dauphin continued his struggle in 1422, and laid siege to Cosne on the Loire, which agreed to surrender, if not relieved before 18th August. Henry marched to save it at the head of his army, but was attacked by a dysentery in his way, which compelled him to resign the command of his troops to his brother the duke of Bedford.

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Henry  
named the  
successor to  
the French  
crown.

<sup>89</sup> See this Treaty in Rymer, vol. 9. p. 896; and in Rapin's History of England. I would refer the reader to Rapin's History, for the minute detail and diplomatic transactions of this reign.

<sup>91</sup> Rymer, vol. 10. p. 33. The dauphin endeavoured to excuse himself for this, by alleging his youth, and denying his consent. Mem. de Pierre Fenin, p. 435.

<sup>90</sup> Rymer, p. 888.

<sup>92</sup> Henry was at this period at Paris, where, says Pierre Fenin, "he strongly attached the inhabitants to him, because he caused justice to be strictly observed, and rendered fairly to every one; which caused the poor people to love him greatly above every other." p. 496.

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illness and  
death;

31 Aug. 1422,

Bedford. The dauphin retired as they advanced, but Henry's disorder increased. He was taken to the Bois de Vincennes. He intreated the duke of Burgundy to be steady in his friendship to England, and his brother to be loyal to Burgundy, wisely foreseeing that the union of the two kingdoms would depend on the continuance of this amity. About an hour before his death, he asked his physicians for their real opinion as to his condition. They begged him to attend to the concerns of his soul, as he could not live above two hours longer, according to the usual course of nature. He then ordered his confessor to recite the seven penitential Psalms; and when the verse was read on building the walls of Jerusalem, the word caught the king's ear; he stopped the recitation, and mentioned that he had proposed to conquer Jerusalem, and to have rebuilt it, if God had but granted him life. The penitential Psalms were then finished, and he soon afterwards expired<sup>93</sup>. The character drawn of him by the contemporary French memoir-writer, may be read as containing his best and deserved panegyric<sup>94</sup>.

From the mistaken bigotry of the day, or from his father having founded his dynasty on the policy of supporting the papal hierarchy in England, Henry degraded his superior mind, and afflicted his nation, by abetting the ecclesiastical persecutions. He had personally attended the burning of one poor man, whose only crime was an heresy, or a deviation from the then established opinions

<sup>93</sup> Mem. Pierre du Fenin, pp. 500, 501.

<sup>94</sup> "He was a prince of great understanding, who would firmly maintain justice; hence the poorer orders loved him above all others. He was much inclined and careful to preserve and protect the middling classes, from the insupportable violences and great extortions which most of the gentlemen made them suffer in France, Picardy, and throughout the kingdom. Especially he

would not allow that the nobles should compel them to take the care and charge of their horses, dogs and birds; which tyranny they used to exercise with impunity, both over them and over the clergy. His admirable wish to remedy these evils acquired him the favour and good wishes of the clergy and inferior people. Mem. Pierre Fenin, p. 501. By this wise policy, more than by his sword, he obtained the crown of France.



opinions about the Sacrament<sup>95</sup>. He had greatly pitied the sufferer, and endeavoured at the stake to persuade him to adopt the required belief; but when he found that the conscience of the poor creature was not to be subdued by the torturing flame, instead of procuring his pardon for his heroism, he left him to his fate. His accession to the crown, and the avowed determination of the church to enforce under his authority an unremitted persecution, produced an insurrection of those who favoured the new opinions.

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Various

<sup>95</sup> Walsingham calls him a smith, p. 421. His notion was, that the consecrated bread was not our Saviour's body, but, as inanimate matter, was inferior in kind to the lowest animal. Occleve, then alive, thus describes the incident, and Henry's conduct:—

Som man for lakke of occupacion  
Museth ferther than his witte may strecche;  
And all thurgh the fendes instigacion,  
Dampnable errors holdeth and kannot lecche  
For no counsell ne rede; as did a *wrecche*  
Not longe agoo which that for heresy  
Convict and bront was unto asshen drye.

The precious body of our Lord Jhesu,  
In fourme of brede he leaved not at all.  
He was in no thyng abasshed ne eschu,  
To say it was but brede matireall.

He seide a priestis power was as small  
As a rakyers or suche another wight.  
And to make it, hade no gretter myght.

My lord the prynce, God him save and blesse,  
Was at his dedily castigacion.

And of his soule hade grete tendirnesse;  
Thurstyng sore his salvacion.

Grete was his pitious lamentacion,  
When this renegade would not blynne  
Of the styngyng errour that he was ynne.

This good lord hight him, to be suche a mene  
To his fader, our liege lord sovereign,  
Yf he renounce wold his errour clene,  
And come unto our good beleve ageyn,  
He shuld of hys lyfe sure be and certeyn;  
And sufficient liveleode eke shuld he have,  
Unto that day he cladde were in his grave.

Also

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Various tracts of the Wickliffites were burnt in St. Paul's churchyard<sup>96</sup>. One book of the same sort, which had belonged to sir John Oldcastle, a brave and noble knight, was read to the king in his private room at Kensington; and he deigned to declare its opinions to be the worst against the faith and church which he ever heard. He asked sir John if he did not think so? a respectful assent was the answer; and when the king inquired why he should have such a book, the knight replied, that he had not read beyond two leaves<sup>97</sup>.

But the clergy charged him with receiving chaplains in his house, who taught these doctrines, and with sending them to diffuse the same opinions elsewhere. The king stopped their further process against him by declaring, that he would try by mildness to persuade him to abandon his errors. The royal efforts to convert his faithful soldier failed; and the king then becoming angry, severely

Also this noble prince and worthy knyght,  
God quyte hym his charitable labour,  
Or ony stikke kyndeled were, or light,  
The sacrament, our blessed Saviour,  
With reverence grete and hye honour,  
He lete sette, this wrecche to converte,  
And make our faith to synken in his herte.

But all for nought. Wold it not betide.  
He held forth his oppynyon dampnable:  
And caste our holy cristen faith aside;  
As he that was to the fende acceptable.  
By ony outward token resonable,  
If he inward hade any repentance,  
That wote He, that of no thyng hath dotaunce.

Lete the divines of hym speke and muse,  
Where his soule is become or whider gone.  
Myne unkunnyng of that me shall excuse.  
Of which mater, knowyng have I none.  
But wold God, tho cristen foes ech one,  
That as he held, were yservid so;  
*For I am sure there ben many mo.*—Occlev. MS. 17 D 6.

<sup>96</sup> 3 Wilk. Conc. 351.

<sup>97</sup> The record of this conversation is printed in Wilkins' Conc. vol. 3. p. 352.



severely upbraided him. Oldcastle retired to his castle at Cowling, in Kent; and Henry, sending for the archbishop, ordered him to proceed against the knight with all celerity. A bitter persecution now began<sup>98</sup>; and no alternative was left to the conscientious and enlightened, but death or hypocrisy. Oldcastle made a guarded confession, which, if conciliation had been at all in contemplation of the assailants, might have satisfied their wishes<sup>99</sup>; but as they had determined on striking deadly blows for the purpose of extermination, they pursued him with questions which left no choice between falsehood and condemnation. His virtue was superior to the former; and he was therefore declared to be a heretic, was excommunicated, and consigned to the fatal flame<sup>100</sup>. He had been committed to the Tower, from which he escaped.

A mysterious transaction now occurred, in which, as in all great party collisions, the truth is difficult to be elicited. Reports were spread, that the Lollards were plotting to destroy the king and his brothers at Eltham. Informed of the design, the king went to his palace at Westminster, to be safer, from its publicity. He was then told, that they were assembling from all quarters into a field near St. Giles, to act under their leader, Oldcastle, on a fixed day and hour. The king at night ordered his friends to arm, and then *first* mentioned what he resolved to do. He was urged to wait till daylight, that he might discern who were willing to act with him or against him; and was advised by others to wait till he got an army together, if a formidable body was to be met. He listened to neither, because he *had heard* that the Lollards intended to burn Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's, St. Alban's, and all the friaries in London. He went therefore to St. Giles in the middle of the night,

<sup>98</sup> 3 Wilk. Conc. 353.

<sup>99</sup> His own words will be given in our chapter on Prose Literature.

<sup>100</sup> Refer to these in the above-mentioned

chapter.—His examination, at considerable length, is published in the State Trials, and will be found very interesting.

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night, anticipating the projected movements of the ensuing day. He found only a few persons there, who, being asked what they wanted, said, "The lord of Cobham." They were seized and imprisoned. They were surprised to find that *no one* came from London to join them. The king had ordered all the city gates to be shut and guarded; and if he had not taken this precaution, there *would have come* "prout fertur," *as it was reported*, 50,000 servants and apprentices against the king. Many were elsewhere taken, who were said (*qui dicebantur*) to have conspired generally against the king<sup>101</sup>. On this account, we may remark, that it is all a series of supposition, rumour, private information, apprehension and anticipation. That the king was acted upon by some secret agents, is clear; that the plots asserted, were really formed, there is no evidence. The probability is, that Henry's generous and lofty mind was found to start at the violences which the bigotry of the papal clergy had resolved upon; and that artful measures were taken to alarm it into anger and cruelty, by charges of treason, rebellion, and meditated assassination. This effect took place. Oldcastle was taken and burnt; a vindictive statute was passed against the Lollards<sup>102</sup>; and the persecution was sternly maintained.

The splendid victory of Agincourt, the acquisition of the crown  
of

<sup>101</sup> I have preferred to state this account from Walsingham, because, as the bitterest enemy of the reformers, he states it most favourably to the king and his party. p. 431.

<sup>102</sup> See it in Wilkins' Concil. vol. 3. pp. 358—360. It shews its origin, and the use made of the alleged plots above noticed, in its recital, which begins, "As great rumours, congregations and insurrections, have been made in England by divers subjects of the king, as well as by those who were of the sect of heresy called Lollards, as by others of their confederacy, excitation and abetment,

to annul and subvert the Christian faith, and the law of God in the kingdom, *and* to destroy our sovereign lord the king, and *all manner of estates* of this realm, both spiritual and temporal, and also all manner of policy and the laws finally out of this land," &c. p. 358. The commonest discernment will perceive the gross and wilful falsehood of the latter part of this recital; and must infer the arts and delusive statements by which the parliament must have been acted upon to pass this statute. The archbishop of Canterbury (Arundel) who was so active  
in



of France, and the shortness of his reign, preserved Henry from any ill consequences from abetting such a system. But they appeared in a destructive shape after the succession of his son. The verbal avowal of the new opinions was repressed, but their secret diffusion was multiplied; and the reforming mind gazed eagerly about, to see how it could be revenged upon the clergy, without incurring the penalties of law. It struck boldly at their wealth, the real source of their power. An address from the commons to the king, to seize the revenues of the ecclesiastical body, compelled them to soothe him by giving up one hundred and ten alien priories<sup>103</sup>. The conflict only assumed a more portentous shape, from the determined violence of the church. That violence made the absolute downfall of one party or of the other, sooner or later, inevitable; and the kingdom continued to be convulsed till this event occurred<sup>104</sup>. Henry sent ambassadors to the council of Constance, which was assembled to preserve the unity, and to consider of the reformation of the church<sup>105</sup>.

in obtaining it, could not have believed what he asserted. We may add, that this "Tower of the English Church," as he is called by Walsingham, p. 432, very shortly survived these iniquitous transactions, for he died the same year. Wals. ib.

<sup>103</sup> Rymer Act. Fœd. vol. 9. p. 280.—I think it probable that lord Cambridge's conspiracy had reference to these transactions; and that Henry V. would have had a reign as stormy as his son's, if it had not been for his French triumphs.

<sup>104</sup> The person of Henry is thus described: Rather above the middle stature; a pleasing countenance; long neck; thin body and limbs; strong and active. He excelled in leaping; and was so swift in running, that he could hunt deer on foot. Tit. Liv. p. 5. Elmham.

<sup>105</sup> Rymer has inserted several letters and documents on this subject in his collection, vol. 9. The substance of one, written to Henry, from Constance, Feb. 2. 1417-1418, is not uninteresting. It is translated and prefixed to L'Enfant's Council of Constance:—

"My sovereign liege lord, and most dread Christian prince upon earth—I recommend myself to your high, royal and imperial majesty, with all manner of honour, worship, grace and obedience.

"My most glorious lord—May it please you to know, that on Wednesday, being the twenty-seventh of January, at or about three o'clock in the afternoon, the gracious prince, your brother, king of the Romans, entered the city of Constance, with your livery of the collar about his neck (a joyful sight to all your liege people!) with a solemn procession of all the states, both in their cardinals, and

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of the several nations, and your noblemen in their richest habits, with your whole nation; and he received your lords graciously and cheerfully; and though the crowd was so great, yet he gave his hand to none but the worshipful men of your nation.

“ And then my lord of Salisbury hastened to the place of general council (where that august monarch was to rest) and took possession of the pulpit, in which the cardinal of Cambray, chief of the nation of France, and your special enemy, had purposed to have made the first oration to the king, in honour of the French nation. But my lord of Salisbury, having the honour of you and your nation at heart, kept possession, and made a fine discourse, with which the king was very much pleased; and as the king had not yet dined, nobody cared to give him any more fatigue for that day.

“ But next day, my liege lord, may it please you to know, that at the nine o'clock bell, all your ambassadors, with all your nation, in their best array, went to worship him in his palace, where he gave them a glad and gracious audience; and there my lord of Chester, the president of your nation, made such a speech to him, as redounded to his own honour, and that of your whole nation: soon after which they took leave of him.

“ Next morning, at ten o'clock, he sent for them again, and took them again every man by the hand; after which he made a speech, wherein he thanked our nation in particular, for their loving, true, and trusty

carriage to his nation, in his absence; rehearsed after what manner the brotherly love commenced betwixt him and my lord your father, and how it is now renewed and cemented with you and your successors, by the grace of God, for ever; and finally he expatiated so much in the high praises of your royal person, of all your lords, your brothers, of the government of holy church, of the divine service, ornaments, and all the honours therein observed, as if it were a paradise in comparison with any place he ever came to before; insomuch that, from the highest to the lowest, he commended your glorious and gracious person, your realm, and your good government.

“ And then my lord of Chester our president, in the name of all our nation (as to his office appertained) made a compendious and elegant recital of all that the Emperor had said; and returned him an answer in every point so pertinent and rational, in so short a space of time, that your nation is for ever bound to thank him.

“ Moreover, sovereign liege lord, as far as I can understand, my lords of Salisbury and Chester are heartily disposed, with the consent of all your other ambassadors, to pursue the reformation of the church, both in the head and members, though with the loss of their benefices; and I make no doubt, but those two lords will always strenuously abide by the good advice and resolution of your brother the king of the Romans,” &c.



# HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

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## PART IV. HISTORY OF RELIGION IN ENGLAND.

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### CHAP. I.

#### ORIGIN AND NATURE OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL SYSTEM ESTABLISHED IN ENGLAND.

THE introduction of Christianity into England, was followed by the establishment of that peculiar system of doctrines, ritual, and polity, which, from its origin in this island, and main support, may be called Papal Christianity. It was continued and augmented with renewed zeal by the Norman ecclesiastics, and pursued by the successive rise of new opinions assailing its various parts. The innovations were for a long time repressed as fast as they were produced; yet each made some impression; and at last, from the accumulated agency of many attacks and many causes, which neither the skill nor the power of the old establishment could resist, that great religious revolution was accomplished in Great Britain, which distinguished the sixteenth century. These causes began to operate with perceivable effect, during that period of our history to which the present Volume is allotted; and

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it will be our duty to trace them to their sources, and to explain their successful agency.

I am aware that there is no object of human thought more difficult to discuss with satisfaction, either to the writer or to his readers, in the nineteenth century, than that which is the subject of this chapter. So much imposture, so many errors, so much fanaticism, and such fierce passions, and therefore so many mischiefs have been connected with religion, by its real and pretended friends, that a portion of the world turn from it with aversion, or view it with a jealous irritability. On the other hand, it has been experienced to be so grateful to the feelings, so necessary to the happiness, so satisfactory to the intellect, and so auxiliary to the moral conduct and social tranquillity of millions, that not only the mass of the people, but the most cultivated taste and the most capacious talents, have delighted to cherish its gracious revelation, expect it to be fairly and reverentially treated, and are displeased that either sarcasm, reproach, or even unfriendly criticism, should be exerted against it. That Christianity is of the divine origin which it claims; that it is worthy of its heavenly Author; and will yet fulfil all the moral hopes, and realize the brilliant promises, which its inspired oracles announce; is the animating belief of its friends. But the historian cannot be blind to the errors with which it has been connected, nor to the evils which its perversions and misapplication have occasioned; and, as it would be disingenuous to disguise, so it would be absurd to omit them. They form the substance of the history of Christianity in every country, and have been so interwoven, not only with the principal transactions, but with the mind, of every part of modern Europe, that the series of our national historiography, especially from the accession of Henry II. would be incomplete, if they were left unnoticed. Most of these errors and evils flowed from the  
excitation



excitation and changes of the mind, and its sensibilities, as new agencies, even those tending to improvement, began to operate upon human nature. The principle of melioration, which is inseparable from mankind, cannot act upon any part of society while so many vices or errors remain, without producing temporary evil in some directions, and resistance and re-actions in others, that will be often injurious. But in every age the inconveniences lessened and the benefits multiplied, till that great mental revolution, already alluded to, took place, of which the English Reformers were the most active authors, and to which England is indebted for a large portion of its present prosperity.

That Christianity was imparted to the world at the time when its promulgation would be most beneficial, is a circumstance which the philosopher requires, which the Christian believes, and which history attests. But, independently of this consideration, it cannot be disputed by any, and it is most important to reflect, that at whatever period Christianity had entered the world, whether two thousand years earlier or two thousand years later, it must have found that world full of other opinions, prepossessions, habits, systems, hierarchies, governments, and individual manners, with many of which it must have allied, and with many conflicted. Some it would change, and others modify; but with the larger mass of existing feelings, customs, reasonings and prejudices, even though erroneous, it must have associated. The tares and the wheat must have grown up together. Nothing but another universal destruction of mankind, and a new created world, could have presented to it a fair, clear, and unspotted tablet, either in the heart or in the mind, for its uncontaminated impressions; and such a world would have been without the cultivation, the knowledge and the judgment, which are requisite for human improvement, and which experience only can supply. These con-

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siderations, which are equally applicable, and therefore must be recollected, in the thirteenth century as well as in the first, will not only explain many imperfections, but also account for many extravagancies in which our pious ancestors indulged. At its first dissemination, and in every period of its progress, all that its ablest friends could accomplish, would be to plant it firmly in the heart and mind, as that heart and mind were then shaped and stored; to multiply its fruits and to extend its ramifications as abundantly as the characters and circumstances of the day would admit; and to leave to the gradual effect of time, and to the beneficial operations of its own and of other agencies, that could successively be brought into action on mankind, those ulterior harvests of improvement, both in the intellect and the conduct, for which our nature is avowed to be destined, and to which it has already made encouraging advances.

Christianity came into the world at a period more full of excited intellect than any preceding age had witnessed, and therefore at a time the best fitted for its mental reception, comprehension, and circulation. But it was intellect, which, even in the most cultivated, was marked with many singular and erroneous habits and prejudices, and which, in the bulk of the human population, was every where disfigured by passions and mistake. The paganism and the philosophy of Greece and Rome, as well as of the Eastern nations, were alike replete with false theories, misdirected feelings, and erring beliefs. The barbarous tribes which, from the Grampian hills to the mountains of Caucasus, encompassed the Roman civilization, were still more enveloped in savage ignorance, and therefore abounding in wild absurdity. Among all of these Christianity more or less penetrated; and with all those incongruous and varying medleys of opinions and habits, which in every one of the diversified individuals of these different nations made



made up his individual mind, Christianity, as fast as it was imparted, was compelled immediately to intermingle. Hence, as it became coloured and shaped by the Oriental mind in the East, the Ægyptian in Ægypt, the Grecian in the Peloponnesus, and the Roman in the Roman empire, so it afterwards had to amalgamate with the Gothic, the Lombardic, the Frankish, the Anglo-Saxon and the Anglo-Norman, in the various regions where the peoples, classed by these appellations, had become diffused. The inevitable consequence was, that in every age of Christianity, and therefore in the middle ages, we cannot expect to see the pure and perfect intellect in beautiful activity, nor Christianity radiant with all its celestial excellencies. We find neither virtue untainted, nor reason undebased, nor piety unalloyed with human weaknesses. In every part, associations of error and truth; the good intention and the foolish superstition; the heretic, the sceptic, the dreamer and the zealot; perpetually offend our taste and excite our resentment. Hence the history of religion is the mixed history of great virtues and great vices, many absurdities and much wisdom; the external form frequently changing; the turbid confusion sometimes diminishing, but never wholly ceasing.

As we advance to our own times, the chaos begins to subside. The light of knowledge diffuses its commanding influence. Judgment multiplies, the moral sensibilities receive a progressive education, and a moral taste becomes the character of the social mind. As these meliorating agents increase in the world, the reign of error becomes feebler. The heart and the head watch and correct each other. Some false opinions and prejudices expire for ever; others become associated with more just combinations of thought, by which in time they are extinguished; and better reasoning and nobler views succeed. It is true, that even in this meliorating process, fresh errors will arise as fresh knowledge pours in. The mind

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must combine its improved accessions with its more imperfect stock. The philosopher will still be like the Moon, half enlightened and half dark ; and in the most exalted mind, an incongruous medley will still exist. But the progress goes on. The errors, which further acquisitions of knowledge, or new combinations of thought, have been always found to produce in one age, are diminished or removed by the larger accumulations of experience and research, and the more correct associations, which the mind, ever revolving its stores, cannot but receive or occasion in the next. The mind of the nineteenth century cannot be, and cannot think, like the mind of the thirteenth. It has not the same materials, not the same feelings, not the same views, not the same impulses, nor the same surrounding habits and occurring circumstances. Thus every age varies from the preceding, and, wherever intellectual cultivation is pursued, rises above the former. The more that time advances in his flight, the more the human intellect must increase in its knowledge, its judgment, its moral feeling and moral taste, unless some tremendous convulsion were to engulf all our libraries, obliterate our experience, palsy our faculties, and whirl us into eternal night. In these reflections, the history both of papal Christianity and the opposing heresies, may be said to be delineated.

To raise an intense feeling of religion, is neither difficult nor sufficient. It is effected now by the Bramin superstition in the Yogees and Jaggernaut victims of India, as it was in ancient times among the whole nation of Ægypt, under its monstrous system of bull and goat worship, cat-veneration, and dog-headed deities. In the middle ages, it filled Europe with monks, and Asia with pilgrims and crusaders. It animated St. Dominic, the Pope, and their emissaries, in the murders of the Albigenses. It has supported, and now revived, the Spanish inquisition, and hallowed the Moloch



Moloch sacrifices of Auto da fés. The human heart is so constituted, as to be responsive to the sacred touch, to be obedient to the heavenly call. But when the sensibility has been kindled, to what shall it be applied? Here begins the difficulty, which every heart has felt and every age lamented. In the direction of this great principle, the mind ignobly, but unavoidably, follows the imperfect reason, feeling, views and habits of the day. Within the period which this History embraces, it was taught to employ its sincere energies in building monasteries; in procuring and venerating dead men's bones; in enriching the church; in idle and endless processions; in superstitious rites; in useless pilgrimages; in crusades of danger and death; and in obeying the Machiavellian mandates of a distant pope. Religion, heavenly as its origin has been, sublime as its principle always will be, and great and glorious as are all its future objects, still needs, in every age, as much wisdom as impulse. But it can have no more wisdom for its companion than the age affords. When the judgment is weak and the knowledge small, the fervour of the principle will connect it as much with folly as with truth; and the pious man, with all his sincerity, will offend many by his absurdities, as well as edify by his goodness. But let not the unbelieving opponent triumph in this admission: he also partakes in full measure of the imperfections, the vices, and the imbecilities of his day; his follies will differ in kind, but are at least equal in amount. The whole of every existing generation are examples of this same truth. We are all infected, more or less, with the imperfections of our own age; we can only improve as human nature generally advances. Some individuals will indeed take the lead in the progress, the heralds or the authors of its success; but unless the population with whom they live can in some measure accompany them, their efforts will be vain, and their march, for some time, solitary or forgotten.

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Thus, from its earliest infancy, Christianity was, as one of its authorized teachers declared it to be, a light shining in a dark world—the partial illumination of a clouded and disfigured mind; therefore always surrounded and confused with fantastic images and obscurity. Every system of tenets and ceremonies, every reasoning and conjecture, every custom and form, that were added to its own simple and primitive precepts—and mind can never act on any subject, in any age, without attaching to it some of its own temporary and varying produce—must have shared and exhibited the imperfections, errors and ignorance, which always abounded even among the most improved part of the population of the world, from the first century to the middle ages.

These general principles will account for the nature and history of the religion of our forefathers. The good intention was never deficient, for the earnest and impassioned, under every system, may be sincere. But, from the intellectual barrenness and absurdities of their time, their fervent piety was continually misdirected. It nourished many wild and injurious superstitions, much hierarchal tyranny, many useless ceremonies, and much wilful priestcraft. Not that the superstitions were always imposture, or the ecclesiastical despotism, in every instance, disingenuous or mischievous; they were oftener the results of the mutual state or experienced necessities of the age. The deceivers and the deceived were for a long time equally honest, equally ignorant, and equally benefited. They believed alike, that the natural phenomenon which they could not explain, was a miraculous event. They both thought the relic a wonder-working agent. The priest, who exorcised, was as convinced of the effective power of his cross, holy water, Ave Marias, or Salve Sancte Thomas, as his humblest votary. When, indeed, the beams of emerging knowledge began to dissipate these delusions, cunning, trembling at the loss of its

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ancient gains, may have begun its impostures. But these were unnecessary while all were credulous, and therefore were not resorted to, till increasing scepticism made them indispensable to the continuance of former power; and then the use of them but accelerated their discredit.

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The Christianity of our Anglo-Norman ancestors was thus mixed with much imperfection and mistake. It was a motley system, coloured and distorted by the effects of the circumstances, errors and fancies of the preceding times, as well as of their own. Christianity, indeed, must always be a jewel of inestimable value. It has not even yet been duly appreciated. But it will be also more or less grotesquely or beautifully set, according to the proportion of excellence which the general knowledge, reason, and sensibility, have attained. It has to be connected with existing governments, taught by existing men, and practised amid existing manners. Ambrosia itself, if poured through a polluted channel, would still be but a mixture of ambrosia and impurity. The Jewish nation exhibited the operation of this principle, after their Exodus; the Christians, soon after their Lord's beatification. Nor has its influence yet ceased. To behold the sun in all its splendour, our vision must be perfect; our own atmosphere unclouded.

It would occupy an undue proportion of the present Work, to trace all the superstitions and controversies of our forefathers, to the particular circumstances, customs, and prejudices of their own or preceding times, which contributed to give them birth: It will be sufficient to have hinted the principle of the investigation, and to annex some general illustrations on the more striking features of our forefathers' belief.

Among the anterior prepossessions of the human mind which most affected Christianity, one great and yet unavoidable cause of  
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its corruptions and controversies, was the rivalry and long contiguity of that specious but immoral Paganism, which had grown up with the aid of the proudest intellects of ancient times, had been interwoven in all their habits, amalgamated with all their literary compositions, adapted to all their feelings, and made interesting to all their passions; and which even the conversion, and establishments, and prohibitory decrees, of Constantine, could not extinguish. After Julian's death, we still find a Pagan made the governor of Cappadocia<sup>1</sup>; and subsequent to the same period, the governor of Rome, a man of distinguished literary talents, in conjunction with the *senate of that* city, ventured publicly to address Christian emperors, one of them of no small celebrity, Theodosius the Great—to restore the Altar of Victory, on which the soldiers might swear their oaths—to re-establish the Vestal Virgins—and to reinstate the ancient temples and their priests in their former property and privileges<sup>2</sup>. A priest of Jupiter derided St. Jerom as a weak and foolish man<sup>3</sup>. About the same period, we find the friends of Paganism in Alexandria strong enough, in revenge for the demolition of their temple to Bacchus, to sally out from their magnificent temple of Serapis, and attack the Christians<sup>4</sup>. The Pagans, in many parts, resisted the order of Theodosius, for destroying their places of worship, and fought for them vehemently in Arabia, Palestine, Phenicia, and Syria<sup>5</sup>. Even after the Imperial edict had issued for the abolition of Paganism, the council of Carthage,

<sup>1</sup> St. Gregory Nazianzen, in his 61st letter, exhorts him to forsake Paganism.

<sup>2</sup> The petition of Symmachus was addressed to Valentinian, Theodosius, and Arcadius. He says, "We ask again for that state of religion which long benefited the republic." l. 10. ep. 61. It is curious to mark his extravagant phrases of civility to the emperors: "æternitas vestra—numines vestri." Ib.

<sup>3</sup> Jerom mentions this incident in his seventh letter.

<sup>4</sup> Sozomen Hist. l. 7. p. 723. He describes this temple as distinguished for beauty and size. It was placed on a small hill.

<sup>5</sup> Sozomen, ib. p. 725.—In pulling down the idol temple of Bacchus, the bishop discovered to the people the contrivances used to impose upon them.



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Carthage, in 401, felt it necessary to declare that temples and idols still existed, and feasts and dancings were made in their honour, which ought to be abolished<sup>6</sup>. The colony of Suffetum put sixty Christians to death, because their Hercules was taken away<sup>7</sup>. A Pagan interceded with St. Austin for his fellow-citizens at Calama, in 409, who had sacrificed to idols<sup>8</sup>. The inhabitants of Madaura are noticed as being principally idolatrous<sup>9</sup>. Synesius, who was converted in 420, had been a Platonic philosopher, and such his friend continued<sup>10</sup>. We find a heathen reasoner boldly telling St. Austin, that the way to reach God was to live well, and to procure the favour of the inferior deities by propitiatory sacrifices, that by them we may ascend to the Supreme Creator; but that as to the Christian Saviour, he could say nothing of him, because he did not know him<sup>11</sup>. Maximus, another heathen philosopher, contended in writing against St. Austin and Christianity: He admitted that there was but one God; but he pretended that this was the same whom the Pagans worshipped under several titles, to signify his several attributes. He could not endure that the Christians should prefer martyrs of obscure and strange names, before those immortal gods, whose names were so famous. And he sneeringly asked, who that particular deity was, whom the Christians supposed to be present even in secret places<sup>12</sup>? As it was made a capital offence, punishable by death and forfeiture of property, to use the ancient sacrifices<sup>13</sup>, these were discontinued; and many Pagans, deprived of their ancient temples, began gradually to frequent the Christian churches<sup>14</sup>. But that their opinions were industriously defended and circulated, even after their public worship was put down by law, we perceive by the continual writings

<sup>6</sup> Du Pin Eccl. Hist. 4th Cent.

<sup>7</sup> This is the subject of the 50th letter ascribed to St. Austin.

<sup>8</sup> See the 90th letter of St. Austin.

<sup>9</sup> St. Austin, letter 232.

<sup>10</sup> Du Pin, 5th Cent.

<sup>11</sup> See Austin, letter 234.

<sup>12</sup> Ib. letter 16.

<sup>13</sup> Sozomen Hist. l. 7. c. 20. p. 736.

<sup>14</sup> Soz. ib.

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writings which the subsequent Christian fathers found it necessary to compose against them, and by the prohibitions which the Christian fathers and councils repeatedly issued against the study of profane authors, from the dread and experience of their seductive effects<sup>15</sup>. On the same principle, they discouraged music, theatrical representations, dancing, and painting; not from an aversion to these interesting arts, but because they were so combined with gross indecencies and Pagan superstitions, and so affected the popular feeling in favour of their ancient worship, that the Christian teachers felt it to be as important to discountenance them, as Plato, on his view of moral use, had banished Homer from his republic<sup>16</sup>.

The controversies, of which we are ashamed, and which have given to the sarcastic pen of an applauded historian its sharpest point, originated from the competition and contiguity of this vivacious Paganism, which, even in the end of the fourth century, such men as Symmachus, Libanius, Eunapius, Ammianus Marcellinus, Zosimus, and Rutilius, maintained with vigilant acuteness, with great versatile ingenuity, sometimes with superior talent, and usually with rancorous acerbity<sup>17</sup>.

We reproach the Greeks for the disputes on the Trinity and Incarnation, which agitated and disgraced the first three centuries; and we reproach them justly, because they deserve our satire, for the giddy vanity, the proud presumption, the unchristian violence, the

<sup>15</sup> As St. Basil, in his 24th homily; Isidore of Pelusium; and the Council of Carthage, in 398. — St. Jerom dissuaded Eutochius from reading the classical authors; and was himself convinced that he had been attacked by a violent fever, as a punishment for reading Cicero and Plautus too solicitously. See his 22d letter.

<sup>16</sup> When Paganism ceased to be dangerous, both music and painting, and also the drama,

were revived, and greatly patronized by the Christian clergy.

<sup>17</sup> The intolerance of Paganism, after it began to be in danger, was fierce and implacable. It was displayed repeatedly in the persecutions of the Roman emperors. Julian's prohibition to the Christians, to study the ancient classics, is another instance. And the same vindictive spirit appears in many passages of the authors above mentioned.



the sophistical casuistry, and the declamatory rhetoric, with which they discussed their theories, and combated with each other. But the historian, in contemplating the polemical mischief, will trace their personal conduct of the dispute to the Grecian character, state of mind and education; and will observe, that the subjects of the discussion flowed naturally and necessarily from the new direction of thought, which the Grecian intellect received from the introduction of Christianity.

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When this blessed religion was first imparted, it found the civilized world either disdainful of all religion, or attached to the worship of visible gods, made as beautiful and impressive as the most tasteful art, operating on the richest materials, could produce; and to the belief of a celestial hierarchy of many gods and goddesses, occasionally obeying the thunder-bearing Jupiter, but multiplying, almost without limit, in their government of the human world, and of all its regions, woods, gardens, rivers, families, and seas. Nor was this system the fancy of the mere vulgar. It was the belief of all the intellectual and philosophical world, which admitted any religion; it was supported by all the polities and governments on the earth. And the more Christianity spread, the more zealously did philosophy attempt to defend and support its polytheistic system, and to prove it to be as compatible even with reason and happiness, as it was venerable from its authority and antiquity. We have the feeling of the ancients expressed in the lamentations of the old man on the departure of his idols<sup>18</sup>, and in the sarcasm of the philosopher on the martyrs of the Christians<sup>19</sup>.

Even after Christianity had imparted almost a new intellect to the world, on the subjects of Deity, providence, and moral feeling, in the religious compositions of the Jewish and Christian prophets and

<sup>18</sup> He had been converted; but on his idol being removed, he burst into tears, crying out, "O miserable man that I am! they have taken away my god! I shall not know how to adore

or pray to him any more!" Cassian apud Du Pin, 5th Cent. p. 12.

<sup>19</sup> See before, p. 321, Note 12.

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and apostles, the philosophers, who continued pagans, only used the sacred illumination to reform and refine their ancient system, not to abolish it. That a mind even educated to Christianity could yet prefer heathenism, we perceive in the example of Julian; and the classical polytheism has, in our own superior days, been not only publicly adopted and maintained by a literary man of some attainments and research<sup>20</sup>, but has been countenanced by one of the most sceptical of our philosophers<sup>21</sup>, and visibly regretted by one of the most critical of our historians. It may be doubted if it would have ever entirely departed from the world, if the Gothic irruptions had not swept it away in their general desolations<sup>22</sup>.

To attack this polytheistic system, it was not enough to shew that it was absurd to worship senseless 'idols of wood and stone, the work of men's hands, which have eyes but see not, feet that cannot walk,

<sup>20</sup> Mr. Taylor's translations of Aristotle and Plato shew his intellectual industry. His version of the hymns ascribed to Orpheus display a power of easy and not inharmonious versification; and his prefatory dissertation endeavours, with the help of Porphyry, to present his favourite system in its most attractive point of view.

<sup>21</sup> Mr. Hume says, "If we examine, without prejudice, the ancient heathen mythology, as contained in the poets, we *shall not* discover in it any such monstrous absurdity as we may at first be apt to apprehend. Where is the difficulty in conceiving that the same powers or principles, whatever they were, which formed this visible world, men and animals, produced also a species of intelligent creatures, of more refined substance and greater authority than the rest? That these creatures may be capricious, revengeful, passionate, voluptuous, is easily conceived; nor is any circumstance more apt, among ourselves, to engender such vices, than the license of absolute authority. And, in short, the whole mythological system is so natural,

that in the vast variety of planets and worlds contained in this universe, it seems more than probable, that, somewhere or other, *it is really* carried into execution." Nat. Hist. Rel. vol. 2. p. 442. 8<sup>vo</sup> ed. 1804.—Mr. Gibbon has not concealed his partiality.

<sup>22</sup> This opinion is strongly impressed on my mind, by the fact, that in the fifth century, after the taking of Rome by Alaric, St. Austin thought it necessary to write his elaborate book *De Civitate Dei*, to prove against the objecting Pagans, that the calamities of the empire were not owing to the establishment of Christianity. It was to repel the same objection, that Orosius, about the same time, composed his *History*. We cannot suppose that they took so much trouble against visionary antagonists. If such men as Symmachus, Libanius, and Rutilius, could prefer Paganism to Christianity in the fourth and fifth centuries; so might others of the same cultivated rank of mind in the following ages, if the Gothic deluge had not overwhelmed it in the West, as the Arabian torrent afterwards did in the East and South.



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walk, and ears that cannot hear.' The improved Grecian, acute though fantastic, and sagacious though perverted; and the Roman, whose intellectual quality was pre-eminently a strong common sense; willingly abandoned this indefensible folly; and, being driven from it, denied as eagerly and as ingeniously as the subsequent Catholic, that they worshipped the visible image in the adoration which they applied before it to the heavenly personage, whom they believed that it represented<sup>23</sup>. It was therefore necessary to wrestle with the system itself; to disprove the existence of the deities who were presumed and venerated; to persuade mankind to disbelieve that there were such beings, under any supposition, either allegorical, historical, physical, or physiological, as Juno, Minerva, Apollo, Hercules, Neptune, Flora, Ceres, Pluto, and all that rabble of fancied divinities, which made the sneering Sage remark, That it was easier, in Greece, to find a deity than a man<sup>24</sup>.

But in order to accomplish this important victory—in order to dispossess polytheism, in theory as well as in practice, of its long-continued empire over the human mind—the first Christians who philosophised were unavoidably led to occupy themselves with considering and discussing the nature of Deity itself—a mighty, boundless, absorbing subject! WHAT IS THIS AWFUL BEING; invisible

<sup>23</sup> Porphyry's book, *De Abstinencia*, labours to make this system as philosophical as it will bear; see the extract in Taylor's *Orpheus*, Diss. 46—64. With what eloquent and enthusiastic unintelligibility Proclus could philosophically expatiate on this subject, may be seen in the same Dissertation, 74—83.

<sup>24</sup> What a mental Antæus the ancient Christians had to combat in this vivacious Paganism, we may infer from Mr. Taylor's deliberate conclusion in our days: "I persuade myself, enough has been said in this Dissertation, to convince every thinking and

liberal mind, that the Greek theology, as professed and understood by the Greek philosophers, is *not* that absurd and nonsensical system, represented, by modern prejudice and ignorance, as the creed of the ancients."—I once wondered at Mr. Taylor; but I am satisfied, that if the fear of popular ridicule could have been removed, he would have had many supporters: Indeed, in what does the passage just quoted from him, differ from the feeling of Mr. Hume, noticed above in Note 21?

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invisible in his person, conspicuous in his works; inferible from every plant, felt by every heart, wanted by all that think? Of majesty the most tremendous, from the extent of his creations; yet displaying kindness, attention, and care the most minute, in having condescended to make the insects and living atoms that almost elude our sight—who thus, alone, unites the most unlimited extent of intellect with the most unwearied and universal application of it, and for the benefit of the smallest points of perceptible existence, as well as of its grandest theatres? What is this wonderful nature, cause of all being, source of all beauty, author of all good; of whose presence we are every where sensible, whose footsteps we can every where trace, whom no greatness can equal, and yet by whom no littleness is overlooked; ever providing his multifarious creatures with the means of their well-being; ever causing the wisely-organized, but complicate and counteracting laws and movements of the various parts of his universe, to continue to act in due subordination and order, that their beneficial results may never and no where be intermitted? What is this gracious first existence, who desires the mental and moral improvement of his rational creatures, and is always putting in action the most effective agencies that their nature will from time to time admit of, to secure and increase the progression of which they are capable, and for which he is solicitous? Who is this all-pervading and all-potent Deity, that deigns, himself, to regulate the government of his innumerable worlds; whom all nature yearns to know, combines to praise, and anxiously contemplates?—The Greek Christians resorted to their scriptures for the desired information, and from them inculcated the sublime truth, primeval, but long abandoned, that GOD was a spirit, the father as well as the sovereign of his works, ONE all-presiding Deity, eternal and self-existent; who had never delegated his sovereignty to inferior divinities;



divinities ; and who permitted no heroes, daimons, genii, penates, or other imagined beings, to share it with him. This topic was the perpetual field of debate between the Grecian Christian and the Grecian polytheist. The latter could admit neither the spirituality, singleness, attributes, nor exclusive sovereignty and providence, of the Great Jehovah, and eagerly disputed them ; and still more the awful hypostatic union, implied, not described, frequently alluded to, always believed, but rather intimated than expressed in the sacred volume. The Christian, maintaining the discussion wherever he diffused his religion, was thus compelled to make the Divine Nature the principal subject of his contemplation and controversy. But the Grecian mind, then universally educated to wordy subtleties and disputatious sophistry ; with vivacity and ingenuity for its great characteristics, and possessing neither extensive knowledge, nor sound judgment, nor correct feeling ; could not pursue this mighty theme with wise moderation, with self-diffidence, or true reasoning. The Trinity and the incarnation were mysteries that excited the egotism of the Grecian believer, instead of his forbearance and humble veneration. Impatient to distinguish himself, by exploring, through argument, or by supplying, through fancy, what argument could not elucidate, and what fancy ought not to have approached, he confused himself with his own subtleties and loquacity. From combating with Pagan antagonists, the Christian theologians soon turned to conflict with each other. New distinctions were taken ; traditional opinions were recollected ; the chimeras of imagination were put together, to have the credit of an original theory, in order to overpower their opponents, or to satisfy themselves, becoming every day more critical and more disputatious. Thus, as well to convert the Pagan world and to resist its hostilities, as to convince and please their own doubts and feelings, and to conquer and

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silence each other, the disputes on the Trinity and incarnation became, from the very state of the world at that time, the prevailing subjects of the first Christian literature and of the first Christian controversies. As the debates spread from province to province of the vast Roman empire, they became but the more complicated, because every region had cherished its peculiar notions on the theory of its ancient gods, and worship, which were now pressed on all sides into the general service; and Chaldea, Persia, Syria, Ægypt, and India, each furnished speculations, which, being eagerly engrafted, by misjudging enthusiasts, on Christianity, became so many heresies, ever multiplying both the combats and the combatants. If we advert for a moment to the incomprehensible doctrines of the unbelieving philosophers, who were at the same time the fiercest opponents of Christianity, on the awful subject of Deity, we shall see, that unintelligible verbosity, mistaken for reasoning, was the fashion of the day<sup>25</sup>; and that neither Christian nor Anti-Christian could avoid it, nor the endless disputes which were its natural consequences.

And as the early Christian controversies arose from the previous existence and companionship of Paganism, and the discussions which this fact compelled and provoked, so the popularity and

<sup>25</sup> I give Porphyry's sentiments in his own words, as translated by Mr. Taylor, who, as he admires, may perhaps understand him; a merit which, not being one of Porphyry's disciples, I cannot claim:—"God, intellect and soul, are, each of them, every where, because no where. But God is every where, and at the same time, in no place of any being posterior to his nature; but he is only such as he is, and such as he willed himself to be. But intellect is indeed in the Deity, yet every where, and in no place of its subordinate essences. And soul is in intellect, and in the Deity, every where and no where with respect to body. But body exists in

soul, and in intellect, and in God. And though all beings, and non-entities, proceed from, and subsist in the Deity, yet he is neither entities, or non-entities, nor has any subsistence in them. For if he was alone every where, he would indeed be all things, and in all: but because he is likewise no where, all things are produced by him; so that they subsist in him because he is every where, but are different from him because he is no where. Thus also intellect being every where and no where is the cause of souls," &c. &c. Vide *Ἀπορρητὰ πρὸς τὰ Νεντά.* p. 233. cited by Taylor, Diss. prefixed to his *Orpheus*, p. 34.



and vicinity of the worship attached to it as inevitably seduced, or urged the Christian leaders to adopt many of its rites and ceremonies, from their connexion with public feelings and their influence on the popular conduct. The possession of the public mind being the object contended for, the public taste, and not the sacred writings, became gradually the dictator. Hence, as we recede from the Apostolical age, and approach the fifth century, we find religion no longer the cherished and retiring guest of the improving heart, the consecrated employment of the private hour, and the secret governor of life—but transformed into a public spectacle, a pompous and splendid theatrical exhibition of vain and haughty actors, dazzling the eye, affecting the senses, and exciting the imagination. St. Jerom contrasts the anxiety to have well-built churches, sumptuously adorned with marble and gold, and presenting altars radiant with precious stones, with the little concern for good ministers within them <sup>26</sup>. The saints and martyrs were held up to veneration, like the deified heroes and emperors; prayers were offered to them for their aid and intercessions; and the eves of their festivals were distinguished by striking solemnities, and the aid of lighted torches was introduced to create impression by a nightly worship <sup>27</sup>. St. Chrysostom employed all the eloquence of his “golden mouth” to exalt the priesthood to an awful sacredness of professional character, that lifted them above ordinary mortals <sup>28</sup>; and the dresses of the clergy were made as superb and imposing, as gold, gaudy colours and varied jewels, could effect. The figures of men, animals, and flowers, were gorgeously embroidered or glaringly painted upon them, alluring the gaze and exciting the admiration of the spectators.

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<sup>26</sup> See St. Jerom's second letter to his nephew, cited by Du Pin, Eccl. Hist. 5th Century.

<sup>27</sup> St. Jerom's 53d letter. Du Pin, ib.

<sup>28</sup> See St. Chrysostom's celebrated book on the Priesthood, which Suidas thinks superior in composition to all his other works.

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tators<sup>29</sup>. Supernatural effects were now ascribed to the ecclesiastical rites. The sign of the cross was declared to cure diseases, expel devils, and defeat enchantments<sup>30</sup>. Holy water was used as if possessed of effects as magical. Incense, flaming tapers, images, pictures, votive gifts, pretended miracles, pompous processions, and religious pageantry, all used in Pagan worship, were addressed to the senses of the votary, as if the eye, not the heart and reason, were to be the source of his religion and the guide of his conduct<sup>31</sup>. It soon became to many a selfish and sensual profession. Christianity was in time so corrupted by the vicious habits of the world, with which it was combined, that we have the censures of St. Jerom for our testimony, that amassment of wealth had become a leading object with the clergy. They made merchandise with the goods of the church. Some became rich by turning monks; many, poor and mean before they entered the sacred order, were afterwards distinguished for their affluence and pride. He tells us, that, though the laws wisely prohibited the clergy from taking legacies, yet that the useful restraint was eluded by the instrumentality of trustees<sup>32</sup>. Canon after canon was issued to forbid the clergy from being usurers. The repetition announces the inveteracy of the practice.

The state of Christianity which we have been describing and accounting for, could not continue without increasing deterioration,  
nor

<sup>29</sup> Asterius Amasenus, in his first homily, describes the Grecians as wearing garments with 600 figures of animals upon them; so that, walking in public, they seemed like painted walls. "You see there lions, panthers, bears, bulls, dogs, woods, rocks and hunters." Some of the more devout had scripture histories woven in them. 13 Bib. Mag. Pat. p. 564.

<sup>30</sup> The 13th Catechesis of St. Cyril Hierosol. ends with this assertion. p. 140. ed. Paris 1631.

<sup>31</sup> There can be no difficulty now in allowing that Dr. Middleton has proved his point of the use of Pagan rites in the Catholic worship, although, as his antagonist contended, some of them had also been practised in the temple of Jerusalem. The corruption was inevitable. Devotion suggested, and, at that time, seems to have required it.

<sup>32</sup> See St. Jerom's second letter to his nephew, cited by Du Pin in his 5th Century.



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nor without some revolution being indispensable to the preservation and improvement of the mind and morals of mankind. Panegyricized as the works of St. Ambrose, St. Jerom, and St. Austin have been—the most respectable of the Latin fathers, perhaps the most useful of all—who just preceded the barbaric irruptions, and in whom the mind of the age appears in its best form, for certainly the wordy nonsense of Porphyry and Proclus was inferior—yet can we read the compositions of these really worthy men, without perceiving that their habits, reasonings, knowledge, views, spirit and conduct, are not those which enlightened intellect would wish to be the general character of mankind? The verdict both of piety and reason has been long since given. They may suit the papal monastery; but they are not qualified to take the lead in a world of intellect, knowledge, sensibility, and good taste.

The needful revolution occurred in the irruptions and settlements of the Gothic nations; and this awful dispensation, calamitous to the existing generation, put human life and history into a new position, and human thought, education, and manners, into new channels. It eradicated the ancient Paganism, removed much other old and inveterate mischief, and introduced some temporary evils; but that it threw the population of Europe into a state of society more fitted for universal improvement, the attainment of that improvement satisfactorily demonstrates. A rapid glance at the ecclesiastical changes which it created, and a view of the peculiar religious structure to which it led, will assist to complete our historical survey.

Of all the novelties which followed the dissolution of the Roman empire, the elevation of the bishop of Rome to the mental and ecclesiastical sovereignty of Europe, was in its consequences the most important. The papal government is indeed a remarkable

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phenomenon in the history of human nature. It presents the political singularity, of a power perpetually broken by short reigns, disputed successions, conflicting rivalries, and, even when most regular, by the incessant elections and accessions of unrelated individuals, which would seem to attach to it every character of human weakness; and yet, amid all these fragments of sovereignty and elements of contradiction, constantly advancing, for several ages, in authority and influence, exactions and usurpations. What invisible spirit always knit such means of feebleness and disorder into that unity and force of action, which made Europe so often tremble at its exerted power, and so long, though often murmuringly, yet respectfully, bend in submission to its will?

We know that on the Grecian emperor's preceding the reason of his age by destroying the images then venerated in religious worship, the bishop of Rome, with the approbation of the West of Europe, separated himself from the Eastern empire, and began the foundation of the Papal royalty. Pepin's solicitation of his sanction for usurping the crown of France, increased both his ambition and importance; and Charlemagne's acceptance of the dignity of emperor from his hands, recognized and established his political predominance. The gift of the title of king of Hungary, in a subsequent age; the deposition of Henry the Fourth of Germany; and the arrogant excommunications and attempted depositions of other monarchs; were but natural consequences of the admitted power of creating the first new emperor of the West.

The donations, by Pepin and Charlemagne, to the Pope, of the exarchate of Ravenna and the contiguous provinces, made him a temporal prince of respectable revenue and political power. But although these possessions may have increased his appetite for more, and certainly provided abundant means of pomp and luxury, yet



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yet there was nothing in the extent of the gifts, which could have produced the dominion, which the popes acquired over the mind of Europe. The magnitude of the granted territory was not sufficient even to preserve them from the hostility of the little Italian princes near them, or to subject any part of Italy lastingly to their power. Hence, although aided with all the veneration and the resources which they afterwards acquired from other countries, the popes were neither able to subdue any additional provinces, nor effectually to defend themselves against a resolute invader. What then was their human support? It was the mental condition, it was the social wants, of Europe, which gave such predominance to the Holy See. The sceptre was rather placed in its hands by the spontaneous wish and actual necessities of those over whom it was wielded with such formidable effect, than seduced by its arts or extorted by its ambition. Its subjects were willing slaves, petitioning it to assume its dominion, from an universal experience of the necessity and the benefit. Particular popes certainly indulged extravagant ambition; and many, by devices of human subtlety and priestcraft, extended and riveted the chains, to the governance of which they succeeded. But every where the despotism they exercised and perpetuated, was, at least originally, invited and welcomed by those whom it alternately cherished and depressed. No tyranny was ever established, that was more unequivocally the creature of popular will, nor longer maintained by popular support.

That it preserved the influence to which it had arrived, by means that, however often well meant, yet operated to increase the superstitions, to perpetuate the ignorance, and to lessen the morality of its subjects, is incontestable to those who trace manners to their causes; and that it has repeatedly maintained its domination by a jealous and unrelenting severity towards its opponents, can be denied

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denied by no one who has read the history of the middle ages of Europe. Its sovereignty, wherever questioned, has been singularly stern and merciless. Other systems have been occasionally persecuting; the Romish church, when its power was large enough to be exerted with political safety, has been so uniformly. The Albigenses, in the thirteenth century; the Hussites, in the fourteenth; the Lollards and Moriscoes, in the fifteenth; the Reformers of Europe, in the sixteenth; the Huguenots, in the seventeenth; all concur to prove, that the papal hierarchy has been in every age a master, who considers all variety of religious opinions as impious rebellion, whose penal visitations are sanguinary, whose displeasure is irremissible and fatal<sup>33</sup>.

But, while we admit that its existence as a dominating church has been for some time past incompatible with the improvements of society, and thence infer, that its beneficial effects were limited to the ruder periods, which admitted and needed its sovereignty; yet it will be a just candour not to forget the obligations which it has conferred upon Europe; the evils which it conquered and removed; the intellectual and moral blessings which it introduced; and the political advantages which it every where occasioned, especially when the pure and disinterested desire of benefiting mankind, abstracted from all selfish views, was its guiding principle. Many of the institutions that arise, are usefully adapted to the wants and conditions of mankind. In one age, one system is a general benefaction; in another, a different one is required, because the benevolence, the integrity, or the intellect, which made the preceding one beneficial, has departed from it. It is the spirit, more

<sup>33</sup> Even at the moment of printing this note (September 1815) the Belgian Catholic clergy are opposing that part of the constitution prepared by the king of the Netherlands, which allows religious toleration in

his dominions. So essentially intolerant is papal Christianity, where the wiser spirit of the government does not coerce and predominate over its hierarchy.



more than the form of an institution, that makes it efficacious. If the animating and directing soul leave the body, the corpse that remains is inert, and must dissolve. The papal monarchy and hierarchy, sometimes actuated by motives purely good, and operating sometimes with sound judgment, conferred in those moments great blessings on mankind. But as soon as wealth, power, and luxury, had corrupted it, these uncelestial spirits produced uncelestial conduct. More vices than virtues began to flow from the sovereignty of the Tiara, and then, its sceptre was broken. Its imperious influence has now ceased; and in political power and foreign sovereignty, from its actual misuse and great pervertibility, ought not to be revived. But the memory of the benefits which it has produced to Europe, should not be forgotten. Among these, the diffusion of Christianity through Europe, though with injurious appendages—the encouragement of its literary education—the maintenance of its ecclesiastical dignities against royal and baronial power, often sheltering the infant vegetation of public liberty, and fostering its growth, especially in England—its exhortations against cruelty in war—its repeated preservation of the independence of Italy—its large contributions to the civilization of the dark ages—its frequent interferences to pacify differences between sovereigns—its decisions of innumerable disputes and discussions—many of its canon and council laws and regulations, and its encouragement to the diffusion of the civil law—must be remembered with gratitude, as positive benefits of the papal sovereignty, which counteracted the effects of its vices and errors, and even at last led to their removal<sup>34</sup>.

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But

<sup>34</sup> One of the pleasing instances of the beneficial influence of the popedom on Europe, in its barbarous state, appeared in their procuring the universal recognition and observance of those stated intervals of peace

and amity wherein the “Pax Dei” prevailed.—Perhaps I cannot give a fairer specimen of the benefits which the popes often conferred upon Europe, than in a short summary of some of the provisions of the decrees

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But conceding to the popes, and to the members of their hierarchy, great general integrity and philanthropy, and a conscientious desire to do what they believed to be right and useful; yet, with every sincerity and purity of intention, they could not be wiser nor more informed than the age they lived in, or than their situation, education, and means of information, permitted. Like every other individual, they shared, and could not but share the imperfections of their day; and therefore the religious system which they upheld through Europe, may be expected to display more sincerity than wisdom, more zeal than intellect, more contrivance than virtue. It may have suited the temporary wants of society at the æra of its formation, but it must be incompatible with our own.

Under this predominating and infallible pope, the father and the despot of all the church, the sacred order was regimented in two great divisions, the monastic and the secular clergy, dependent on him, but independent of each other. To these, in the thirteenth century, were added a new and anomalous class, the ambulatory or mendicant friars, who diffused themselves through the lowest as well as the highest classes of society, and thus renovated the vigour and influence of the papal government,

decrees of one of them, in 1179:—That no archbishop visiting his parishes shall have more than 50 persons in his retinue, no bishop more than 30, no cardinal more than 25, no archdeacon more than 7, no decani more than 2. That no Christians shall serve as pilots or steersmen in Saracen ships. Tournaments prohibited. That there shall be truce from the fourth hour after sunset to the second hour after sun-rise, and from Advent to the Octave of Epiphany, and from Septuagesima to the Octave of Easter. No church burial to those who in war, like pagans, destroy and lay waste all

things, nor regard churches or monasteries, nor spare women or children, any age, or either sex. No Jew or Saracen to have Christian slaves. No clergyman to have many churches, nor to take secular procurations. Usurers forbid the communion. Peace to be kept towards the clergy, merchants and husbandmen, and towards the animals and things used in agriculture. Prelates to have, in every cathedral, a master to teach the clergy and poor scholars gratis, and to provide him with a sufficient maintenance. *Decreta Alex. Hoveden*, pp. 582—589.



ment, when its power began to dissolve; though they also, unaware, contributed to its downfall. The monasteries were governed by their abbots and priors; the secular clergy by their bishops and archbishops<sup>35</sup>. These chiefs of both these divisions of the hierarchy, were parts of the baronial parliament in England. The hierarchy having been first established in an empire founded on military despotism, and in which most of the subordinate authorities partook of the character of their chief, a despotic principle pervaded its system and directed its spirit, from the papal monarch to the lowest priest.

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The great foundation, of the dominion and influence of the Pope and his various clergy, proceeded from the popularity of the doctrines and ceremonies, which he supported or established. These doctrines and ceremonies, shaped and coloured by the mental prepossessions that accompanied them, had been sagaciously made interesting to the feelings, and adapted to the prevailing opinions of mankind.

It is one of the intellectual beauties of Christianity, that it is in its leading incidents peculiarly addressed to the sympathies of our nature; for, by this means, it is adapted to cling tenaciously to the human heart, while that heart continues impressible by the interesting, the tender, the benevolent, the disinterested, and the pathetic. That its benign Author should condescend to be born of a lowly and virtuous maiden, and should begin his mortal life a little babe, the most interesting object of creation—That the first annunciation of this great event should be from angels, singing ‘Peace and good-will towards men’—That the great Teacher

<sup>35</sup> How completely subordinate our archbishops of Canterbury were to the pope, we may infer from the oath of one of them, on taking the pall in 1382: “I swear that from this hour, as long as I live, I will be faithful

and obedient to the blessed Peter, and to the holy apostolic Roman church, and to *my* lord Urban VI. the pope, and his successors canonically entering,” &c. Wilkin’s Concil. vol. 3. p. 155.

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Teacher of mankind should select for himself the simple and lowly state of unpretending poverty ; live with his earthly parents a dutious son ; subject himself to feel all the wants, weaknesses, defective education, and growing improveabilities of our nature, and remain in such voluntary humiliation that he had not even where to lay his head—That in his public life he should turn from wealth and greatness, and seek out the sick, the needy, the ignorant, the miserable, and the penitent, that is, the great mass of his human creation, in order to relieve, instruct and improve those, whom the world before him had disdained and deserted, and whom the world since his death has only lately begun, adequately, to consider—That, in the instances of John and Lazarus, he should deign to form an affectionate friendship, with two virtuous minds in the lowliest walks of life, as if to invite us to cherish the virtuous sympathies with the good of all classes, though he has not made an imperious duty of feelings, which are only amiable when rightly placed and rightly acting, and which, depending so much on situation, accident and connexion, could not justly be made positive or universal precepts—That, unmoved alike by menacing power and malignant hostility, by popular acclamation and bigoted derision ; equally avoiding the offered honours, and forgiving the ingratitude of his countrymen ; he should firmly and deliberately proceed to attest the purity of his mission, and to seal its mysterious purposes, by submitting to personal sufferings and a painful death—That this death of agony he should meekly and patiently endure, amid every circumstance of terror, contumely, and disgrace, and yet employ his last breath in petitioning his Almighty Father to pardon his infatuated murderers ; kindly urging their only apology, ‘ because they know not what they do ’—These facts, with many others in his biography, present such a succession of appeals to  
our



our sensibility, that no bosom which believes their truth can resist their impression. The Greek and Roman clergy early felt their effects, in common with all mankind, and based their religious system on the universal sympathy. But before the irruption of the barbarians, from the nature of the distorted mind of the day, the Greeks had spoilt the best themes of Christianity, by the egotisms of their rhetoric, and the selfishness of their polity. The barbaric intellect, being totally illiterate, was ruder and more simple. It was too inert to comprehend a loquacious and gaudy eloquence, polished periods, or abstract and wordy argumentation; but it could intensely feel the common sympathies of the human heart; by these it could be actuated and governed: therefore, on these the Catholic clergy founded their leading ceremonies and exhortations; and with wonderful effect. Their own hearts being sometimes their instructors, they influenced others by what affected themselves.

If the Christian world had then been as intellectual as at present, its ecclesiastical chiefs, rarely in their own accomplishments below the age they influence, would have founded their system on those parts of their great Legislator's life and tuition, which would have united faith, sensibility, and reason, in the most efficacious operation for the improvement of the heart and mind of cultivated man, and which would have provided for its own melioration as that improvement advanced. But, semi-barbarians themselves, and having to act on barbarians, they could neither conceive nor inculcate the best and wisest form; nor would the best and wisest form for an enlightened age, have been, perhaps, the most useful for the first instruction of an ignorant and brutish period. Many of the fathers themselves and ancient Christian writers, even after the second century, had been Pagans up to their manhood; and many were barbarians by birth, or had

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followed worldly professions<sup>36</sup>. They imbibed Christianity with sincerity and zeal; but it was still Christianity mixing itself with their minds, already stored with other prepossessions, and formed by other systems and associations. Christianity improves, and may regenerate, but does not new-create the individual. The blood of a noble animal may be transfused into the body of an inferior one, but its ancient form and features continue. A Christian Kalmuck will still have a Kalmuck mind, though greatly ameliorated and enlightened by his new instruction. So the Christianized Pagan, African, Gaul, Spaniard, or Goth, of the fourth century, notwithstanding his conversion and subsequent illumination, must have displayed that mixture of good and of imperfection, of new instruction and of former peculiarities, which all humanity has hitherto experienced. It is therefore vain to expect wisdom without alloy from the ancient fathers and popes, either in their writings, their conduct, or their institutions. Too solicitous to be popular, they frequently stooped down to the age, instead of raising it even to their own degree of merit. A pope was gently reproached in the eighth century, for suffering Pagan ceremonies to continue, under his own eyes, in Rome itself<sup>37</sup>. Even Gregory the

<sup>36</sup> As Tertullian, an African; St. Cyprian, an African, and teacher of rhetoric; St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, whose father was a violent heathen; Arnobius, a professor of rhetoric in Africa; Lactantius; and St. Paulinus, a Gaul; were all converted Pagans. St. Pachomius, the author of the regular monastic life, was born of Pagan parents, and for some time had been a soldier; Synesius was a Platonic philosopher; St. Austin, an African, studied rhetoric at Carthage, and was professor of rhetoric at Milan, his father was a Pagan; St. Hilary was a Gaul, bred up in the Pagan religion, and not converted till after his marriage and the birth of a

daughter; St. Ambrose was a Gaul, had been a pleader of causes, and was governor of Liguria, when he was suddenly made a bishop by popular force; St. Jerom, born near Pannonia and Dalmatia; Apollinarius, an Egyptian rhetorician; St. Gregory Nyssa, at first a teacher of rhetoric; St. Amphilochus, a lawyer and a judge; Severus Sulpicius, the Sallust of Christianity, had been in great repute at the bar; and Prudentius, whose verses were so much studied by the Catholic clergy, was a Spaniard by birth, and had been a judge. See Du Pin's Eccl. Hist. and Cave's Hist. Liter.

<sup>37</sup> Our Boniface, the active missionary of Germany,



the Great desired his missionaries to humour some of the Anglo-Saxon superstitions, by giving them a Christian application<sup>38</sup>. In other countries, and in their general system, they studied what would affect, rather than what would improve<sup>39</sup>. We know that this policy has been pursued by the most zealous missionaries of the Catholic church in modern times<sup>40</sup>, although, wherever it operates, it deteriorates Christianity<sup>41</sup>, and establishes

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Germany, ventures even to tell the Pope, that pagan customs were kept up in his own city, Rome, and pagan superstitions practised; and he urges his paternity to prohibit "istas paganas" there. Ep. Bonif. 132. ap. Mag. Bib. t. 16. pp. 106 & 117.

<sup>38</sup> Gregory's solicitude to attract the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity by connecting it with their ancient superstitions, appears in his Letter to Melitus. He advises him to let their idolatrous temples remain, but purified by holy water; and as they were accustomed to sacrifice oxen to their idols, he recommends that huts of boughs of trees should be made round these temples, turned into churches, and that their joyous festivals should be celebrated there, but on the birthday of the saint whose relics were in the church; so they should kill their animals, not to the devil, but ad laudem Dei. Bede, l. 1. c. 30. p. 71.

<sup>39</sup> This is frequently remarked by Mosheim, and is visible in many parts of the ecclesiastical history of the middle ages.

<sup>40</sup> The temporizing conduct of the Catholic missionaries to China and elsewhere, is well known. Of the Jesuits, Mosheim observes, "They indulge their proselytes in the observance of all their national customs and rites, except such as are glaringly inconsistent with the genius and spirit of the Christian worship. These rites are a little modified, and are directed towards a different set of objects, so as to form a sort of coalition between Paganism and Christianity." Eccl.

Hist. vol. 5. p. 9. Coote's ed. The same policy was often pursued between the fourth century and the fourteenth.

<sup>41</sup> We have a most lamentable proof of this deterioration in the corruption even of sacred history, in the Persian Life of Christ, composed by St. Francis Xavier, for the converts whom he made in the East Indies. In this work he incorporates with the Gospels the wild and fabulous tales of the legends, and others, as true history. For instance, he states, that the Christians keep Mary's birthday on the 8th Sept. because a person every year heard on that day a wondrous melody in heaven, and upon inquiring, was told by an angel, that it was Mary's birth-day. p. 21.—This is inserted as a real fact, and as authentic history—That Augustus Cæsar, on our Saviour's birth, sent for a Sibyl, to know if any one had been born in the world greater than himself: That the sibyl, nine days afterwards, taking him aside, shewed him at noon a golden circle round the sun, and in the middle the virgin holding her child to her breast; and told him that babe was greater than he was; a voice at the same time pronouncing in the sky, 'This is the altar of heaven.' p. 73. It abounds with falsehoods of this sort, interwoven with the sacred history. See Xavier's *Historia Christi*, Persice conscripta, published by L. De Dieu.—The Persian History of St. Peter, believed to be by the same author; is written on the same plan, to the utter confusion of all historical truth.

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a deteriorated system<sup>42</sup>. From the first hour of the first adoption of this worldly cunning, it ensured the prevalence of intellectual evil in religion, pursuing and spoiling its intellectual good: and the feasts of the ass, the feasts of fools<sup>43</sup>, and most of the immoral and debasing mummeries, disgusting frauds, and lying legends<sup>44</sup>, that were allowed or used in the Christian world, prove, that what might have been expected from reasoning, actually took place in practice<sup>45</sup>.

Hence, in forming gradually their system of ritual, ceremonies, and doctrines—and it was progressively formed between the third century and the thirteenth—the popes and ancient clergy consulted the ignorance and prejudices of their age, and their own self-interest, instead of their reason or evangelical truth. They abandoned the written record for the vague tradition; and built on the latter, in preference to the former, because it was more pliable, and its pliability more expedient. They did not study the sympathies of Christianity with the simple and sublime view of using them to produce the noblest effects on the mind and conduct of the world, of which they are capable. They sought for worldly influence, honour,

<sup>42</sup> What a defective, weak, and in many respects degrading, system of morals and religion was invented by the popes and the clergy of the middle ages, and inculcated as real Christianity, may be seen in St. Gregory's *Morals*, the great text-book of those times—their *Manuels de Pieté*—their popular legends—Lombard's *Sentences*—and the works of their famous casuists.

<sup>43</sup> That these abominable feasts should have been not only allowed, but encouraged, and partly acted by the clergy of the middle ages, fully evince the truth of the reasoning in the text, that an imperfect age can only teach and relish a very imperfect morality and religion. See the Note at the end of this Chapter.

<sup>44</sup> The Koran itself, and the wild reveries and traditions of the Mohamedan zealots, do not contain more untruths than the legends of the papal hierarchy, and the lives of the saints who figure in the Roman martyrology, and fill the hundred folio volumes published by Bollandus.

<sup>45</sup> To have an adequate conception of the monstrous fables invented and taught as sacred truths by the friars of the middle ages, I would refer the reader to only one collection, the "*Alcoran des Cordeliers*," which contains some of those invented in honour of St. Francis, taken from the book of Bartholomew de Pise, a Cordelier, on the conformities between his saint and our Saviour.



honour, pomp, wealth, and power; and they framed and diffused that artificial and perverted combination and routine of belief, forms, and observances, which best suited earthly ambition and earthly propensities<sup>46</sup>. Even when honest and pious, they were unable to feel their own incapability of forming a perfect system. They believed, not only that they were authorized, but also that they were fit, to compose an infallible and everlasting system, which no time could improve, and no future generation should have a privilege to alter. They have transmitted it down to the present period, with the character of immutability upon its front; and by this inflexibility to all improvement, they have condemned it to become obsolete as the age advances, in company with the venerable fathers, who only live by its continuance.

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In selecting a few striking instances of the peculiarities of the religious system imposed upon our forefathers, and of their studied application to some of our best and most natural sympathies, we may begin by noticing the use of the cross. Such a death, by such a character, in such a cause, and borne with such magnanimous benevolence, and for such objects, has never failed to produce the most sympathetic veneration in the bosom of the devout votary. At the sight of the cross, the compassionate recollections are accustomed to recur. The cross was therefore made the perpetual companion of the Catholic clergy. In their private devotions, at their public worship, in their domestic ministrations, on their buildings, in their highways, within their houses, with their missions, in their cells, on their dress, in every exercise of their official pomp or pastoral duty, the cross was displayed with sedulous respect and continual impression<sup>47</sup>. The personal

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cross and  
crucifix.

<sup>46</sup> Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History contains many valuable facts and observations on this subject.

<sup>47</sup> The use and frequent spectacle of the cross in catholic countries, have been often noticed by travellers. Formerly, in England, to

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personal representation attached to it, aided its general effect; and in the metrical verses often composed upon it<sup>48</sup>, we see the appeal to the human sympathies put into phrase, which, however simple or homely, was rarely read or heard with unavailing effect<sup>49</sup>. The

to have the cross carried before them, was so great a mark of dignity to the prelates, and such a source of commanding respect, that the archbishop of Canterbury repeatedly struggled to prevent the prelate of York from carrying *his* cross in the province of Canterbury. See Wilk. Concil.

<sup>48</sup> We have a specimen of one of these rhymes, taken from the book of St. Cuthbert, a MS. at Durham Cathedral. It was written under a crucifix:—

Wyth was his nakede brest, and red of blod his syde;  
Bleye was his fair handle, his wond dop and wide.  
And his arms ystreick hey uphon the rode;  
On fif strides on his body, the stremes ran a blode.

Hearne's App. Ford. vol. 5.

Our venerable Lydgate has left us a stanza of this description:—

Beholde, O man, lyft up thyne eye, and see  
What mortal payne I suffrede for thy trespas.  
With piteous voyce I cry, and say to the,  
Beholde my woundes; beholde my bloody face.  
Beholde the rebukes that do me so manace,  
Beholde myne enemyes that do me so dyspyçe,  
And how that I to reforme the to grace,  
Was lyk a lame offred in sacrifice.

Lydg. Test. MS. Bib. Reg. 18. D 11.

<sup>49</sup> A longer effort of a pious muse, written in a MS. of the monastery of Shene, under a crucifix, may be here noticed:—

Wofully araide  
My blode, Man!  
For thee ran;  
Hit may not be naide,  
My body blo and wanne,  
Wofully araide.  
Behold me  
I pray the  
With all thyne hole reason  
And be not hard hertid;  
For this encheson,  
That I for thi saule sake  
Was slayne in good seson  
Begiled and betraide  
By Judas fals treson:

Unkindly intretid,  
With sharp corde sore fretid,  
The Jues me thretid:  
They mowid; the spittid  
And dispisid me.  
Condemned to deth,  
As thou maiste se.  
Thus nakid  
Am I nailid,  
O man! for thy sake.  
I love the;  
Thenne love me;  
Why sleepest thou? Awake!  
Remember, my tender hert  
The rode for the brake.  
With paynes  
My veins  
Constrayned to crake.

Thus



The birth of Christ was found to be a circumstance, which, like his death, touched the tenderest feelings of the heart. A beautiful mother, nursing an angelic babe, no eye could contemplate without sympathy melting into affection. The ancient clergy singled out this natural circumstance, and made it one of the most prominent and sacred parts of their system. The earliest efforts of the arts, in their humblest as well as in their most polished state, have been always employed by the papal hierarchy, to make the interesting representation. It was the intensity of this sentiment, which led the chivalrous gallantry of the barbaric mind to invest the Madonna with every attribute of purity, tenderness, pity, and condescension. The alarmed consciences of the violent ages, ever recollecting a thousand deeds of wrong and cruelty, turned, whenever awakened, with awe from a neglected Deity and a disobeyed Saviour, to propitiate and implore a kind and compassionate lady. To offend, and be forgiven, were natural occurrences in their intercourse with the earthly fair. It was delightful to suppose such a

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The virgin  
Mary and  
infant Jesus.

Thus was I defasid ;  
Thus was my flesh rasid ;  
And I to deth chasid ;  
Like a lambe led into sacrifice.  
Slayne I was in most cruel wise.

Of sharp thorne  
I have worne  
A crowne on my hed.  
So rubbed  
So bobbid  
So rufulle ; so red.  
Sore payned,  
Sore strayned,  
And for thi love ded.  
Unfayned,  
Not denied my blod for the shed.

My fete and handis sore,  
With sturde naylis bore ;  
What myght I suffer more,

That I have sufferde, man! for the?  
Come when thou wilt ; and welcom  
to me.

Dear brother !  
None other  
Thing I desire,  
But give me thi hert ;  
For to rewarde mine hire.  
I am He that made the erth,  
Water and fire ;  
Sathanas that sloven  
And right lothely sire :  
Hym have I overcaste ;  
In hell prisoner bound faste ;  
Where ay his woo shall laste.

I have purvaide a place full clere,  
For mankind whom I have bought dere.

Hearne has printed these in his Appendix  
to Fordun, vol. 5. pp. 1397—9.

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mediatrix in the skies. Eagerly, therefore, did the feelings, the fears and the hopes, of our rude forefathers, believe the Virgin Mary to be the queen of heaven, the sovereign lady of the angelic hosts, the empress of the world<sup>50</sup>. The Scriptures were little known and less consulted, and therefore were not supposed to be at variance with this theory. In every age, men tend to believe as they wish, and therefore willingly combined to place her as an effective goddess in the skies<sup>51</sup>, whose intercession with her Son was warmly urged for all her votaries, and who was even at last supposed to be almost the only channel of mercy here<sup>52</sup>. The clergy,

<sup>50</sup> She was mentioned and invoked by these titles, in the fourteenth century, in England.

<sup>51</sup> Even Chaucer gives her the epithets of omnipotence, in his *Priere de Nostre Dame*, made, it is said, for the dutchess of Lancaster :—

Almighty, and all merciable queene !  
To whom all this world fleeth for succour,  
To have release of sinne, of sorrow, of tene ;  
Glorious virgine, of all floures, flour !  
To thee I flee, confounded in errour.  
Helpe and releeve ! Almighty debonaire !  
Have mercy of mine perillous langour ;  
Venquist me hath my cruell adversaire.

Chauc. p 399. Chalmers' ed.

<sup>52</sup> Chaucer so expresses himself in the above prayer, obviously not as his own invention, but as the common feeling of the day :—

Sooth is, He ne graunteth no pity  
Without thee : for God, of his goodnesse  
Forgiveth none, but it like unto thee.  
He hath thee made vicaire and maistresse  
Of all this world, and eke governesse  
Of Heaven : and represseth his justice  
After thine will: and therefore in witnesse  
He hath thee crowned in so royal wise.—Ib. 401.

I quote Chaucer, in preference to the divines of the day, on this subject, because he gives the popular and practical feeling upon it at the time when the fancy had reached its height, in England, and shews that the mediatorial and pardoning offices of our Saviour were then transferred to Mary. A few other lines may be quoted :—

Gracious maid and modir !  
Help that mine fader be not wroth with me.



clergy, observing how useful this opinion was to bring the wild imaginations and fierce spirits of the middle ages into a due subjection to religious impressions, and also themselves partaking of the general credulity, universally patronized and strenuously enforced it<sup>53</sup>. It was one of the papal delusions that was the last given up in this country<sup>54</sup>; and it still maintains in others its ancient impressions on the Catholic mind<sup>55</sup>.

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I.

ORIGIN OF  
THE ECCLE-  
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The friendship shewn by our Saviour to some individuals, and the condescending affection which he displayed for mankind in

Impassioned  
and familiar  
devotion.

For whan a soule falleth in errour  
Than makest thou his peace with his sovereign.  
Whoso thee lovest, shall not love in vaine,  
That shall he find, as he the life shall lete.

We han none other melody ne glee  
Us to rejoyce in our adversite  
Ne advocat none, that will dare to prey  
For us, and that for as little hire as ye,  
That helpen for an Avemary or twey.

O treasore of bounty to mankind!—  
This world awaiteth ever on thine goodness  
For thou ne failedst never wight at nede.

To you mine soule penitent I bring;  
Receive me - - - Heaven queen! - - - &c.—pp. 400, 401.

<sup>53</sup> The archbishop of Canterbury's order, in the first year of Richard II. shews how she was represented and venerated: He orders his clergy to supplicate (devotissime exorent) "the Almighty God, and his mother the glorious Virgin Mary, and all the saints (sanctos) and saintesses (sanctas) of God, with a pure heart and devout mind, in their prayers." Wilk. Conc. vol. 3. p. 121. Thus not making the least distinction between the Deity and the virgin Mary.

<sup>54</sup> The famous John of Gaunt, by his will, bequeaths his soul to the virgin: "En-primes jeo devise m'alme a Dieu et sa tres douce miere Sainte Marie." Royal and Noble

Wills, p. 145.—In Richard the Second's reign, a woman alarmed the Scots, who were attacking Carlisle, with a tale, that the English army was approaching. They fancied that they saw the banners, and fled from the town. "This woman was thought to be the glorious virgin Mary, the patroness of Carlisle, who is always ready to help the inhabitants of Carlisle." Knyght. 2675. This sentiment is from an author who was the contemporary of Wycliffe.

<sup>55</sup> I observe that both Massillon and Pere Bourdaloue usually begin their sermons by invoking her.

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in occasional expressions, and peculiarly in his last address<sup>56</sup>, raised more justly strong emotions in those, who possessed or could read the sacred volumes; and induced individuals to cultivate a tender and affectionate veneration. The clergy of the middle ages were neither inattentive nor insensible to these impressions; and some of them, emerging from the rabble of the popular saints, composed works of impassioned and familiar devotion to him, that interested others as much as themselves; which still exist in our libraries<sup>57</sup>, and of which Thomas à Kempis is an improved and more cultivated example<sup>58</sup>. Our Lydgate has furnished us with an effusion of this sort<sup>59</sup>.

A source

<sup>56</sup> St. John, ch. xiv.—xviii.

<sup>57</sup> A specimen of much earnest and warm devotion may be seen in the *Contemplationes divinæ Amoris*, written in the tenth century, and printed in the *Bib. Mag. Pat.* vol. 5. p. 419. A few extracts will give an idea of selected tenderness of the style. “*Dilexisti et amasti nos dulciter, benignissime Domine! fons veri amoris, dum carnem nostram mortalem humiliter induisti. Dilexisti nos, O amantium vita! quia mortem crudelissimam pro nobis miseris voluntarie sustinuisti—Nihil, Domine Jesu! amore tuo suavius; nihil dulcius; nihil utilius; nihil que jucundius. O fons immensæ dulcedinis, qui nunquam deficis—non est pater; non mater; non amicus—qui nos tantum dilexerit, quantum tu, Domine! qui fecisti nos. Absorbeat*

*igitur, quæro, amantissima, mentem meam ab omnibus quæ sub cælo sunt, melliflua vis tui amoris, ut toties tibi inhæream; sola que suavitatis tuæ dulcedine pascam, delecter et inebrier—Auxiliare mihi dignare, piissime Domine! qui non potes non amare et compelle rebellem animum meum ad te amandum, ut tibi placide serviam, et vitam, obtineam in amore sempiternam.*” 420—422. He certainly connects a great deal of feeling with his devotion; though he could not avoid obeying the impulse of his age, in deviating into a rhetorical effusion on the virgin Mary, p. 478.

<sup>58</sup> A specimen of warm and earnest devotion occurs in the work of Gerhard of Zutphen, p. 839, one of the authors to whom Thomas à Kempis has been ascribed.

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<sup>59</sup> O Jhesu! Jhesu! here myne orison!  
 Brydell myne outrage under thyne desciplyne.  
 Fetter sensualite; enlumyne my reason,  
 To folowe the traces of spirituall doctryne.  
 Let thy grace lede me right as a lyne  
 With humble hert to lyve to thy plesaunce.  
 And, blessed Jhesu! or I this lyfe shall fyne,  
 Graunt of thy mercy, shrift—housell—repentaunce.



A source of influence peculiarly operative, from its connexion with the Pagan superstitions of our forefathers, was derived from the awful and mysterious qualities attributed to relics, or pieces of the decayed bodies of a departed saint, or rather of an ecclesiastic canonized by the pope; for the ascription of sanctity, anterior to official canonization, was a prescribed heresy. Death, even to an enlightened mind, is so reasonably awful, that we cannot wonder that among every people, though dared perpetually in the field of conflict, yet in the domestic hour, in the languor of sickness, and in the moment of nervous agitations, it has been always a source of terror and superstition. All nations believe that some state of animation succeeds to death, though the fond hope has been dressed in a thousand fantastic shapes, both of terror and superstition. All have indulged suspicions or a belief, that the mysterious dead may revisit the world from which they have been corporally severed—an interesting fancy, always possible, though never probable. Hence necromancy, or invocations of the dead; and wonders performed by their agency or in their name, have been favourite practices in most countries, and especially among our

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Relics.

Let me not rest, nor have no quiete.  
Occupy my soule with spirituall travayle,  
To synge and say, ' Mercy, Jhesu swete.'  
My proteccion agyne fendes in batayle;  
Lettynge asyde all other apparayle,  
And in Jhesu to put all myne affiaunce.  
Treasoure of treasours! that may me most availe,  
Graunte or I dye, shrift—housel—repentaunce.

My fayth, my hope to the Jhesu doth call;  
Which gloriouse name shall never oute of mynde.  
I shall the seke, what happe that ever befall.  
By grace and mercy I trust I shall the fynde,  
And, but I did, truly I were unkynde.  
Which for my sake was pearsed with a launce,  
Unto the hert. Jhesu! leave me not behynde;  
Graunte or I dy, shryft—housell—repentaunce.

Lydg. Test. MS. Bib. Reg. 18. D 11.

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Saints.

our Gothic ancestors. It was in exact harmony with these vague and wild suppositions, that the papal clergy diffused industriously the belief, and maintained the certainty, that a miraculous power attended the genuine and authorized relics of every legal saint<sup>60</sup>. No opinion was more fervently embraced or more tenaciously retained than this chimera, with the analogous efficacy of holy water<sup>61</sup>, consecrated tapers, and jargon exorcisms; because all the inherited traditions of the ancient world coincided on this point with the zealous doctrines of their Christian priests.

Consequential to this superstition, was the religious invocation of the departed saints<sup>62</sup>. If their earthly fragments could command nature, how much more their personal existence! Again imperfect man shrunk with terror from his all-perfect God, and took refuge among beings of his own species, placed by himself in heaven, and there made his guardian angels, his penates, his personal deities. The same principle which had led the ancient world to people the skies with the intermediate divinities of Paganism, renewed the fond mistake and favourite theory, but under a new denomination, and in a new costume of character and dress. The saints were beatified monks, as Odin was a beatified savage; and the classical gods and goddesses had been little else in manners, than the deified heroes and heroines of Greece. But even this delusion

<sup>60</sup> I say the authorized relics of every *legal* saint, for in 1287, the synod of Exeter found it necessary to declare, that no one was to worship relics *newly found*, until they had been approved of by the Pope. Wilk. Conc. vol. 2. p. 155.

<sup>61</sup> There was some profit resulting from holy water, for the same synod of Exeter directed the beneficia of holy water to go to poor scholars. Wilk. ib. p. 147.

<sup>62</sup> The usual rules for making saints, seem to have required that fifty years should have first elapsed; that there should be proper certi-

ficates and depositions of the miracles which were said, or supposed to have been performed. No canonization was valid but that of the pope. The canonization of Greathead was often petitioned for, but not successfully. The fifty years was a convenient interval for the loss of all contradictory evidence, and for the growth of a sufficient quantity of traditionary accounts. For a copious list of the saints of the Romish church, see Fabricius Bibliotheca Antiquaria, pp. 262—272; and on their canonization, 273—275.



delusion was useful in its day. Our forefathers knew nothing of the powers of nature, or its regular agencies ; every thing beyond their scanty experience and scantier knowledge was thought to be supernatural. And if the clergy had not introduced their saint-theory, which connected all that they feared and hoped with Christianity, the witch, the conjurer, the jogeleur, the necromancer, and the astrologer, would have claimed the deserted ground, and have gained an ascendancy over the human mind, of which the high patronage and long continuance of witchcraft and astrology prove that it would have been difficult to have dispossessed them. To link the miraculous agencies of saints and relics with Christianity, was to establish a competition which precluded the prevalence of the magical superstitions, while Europe remained in ignorance ; and when it rose to knowledge, the familiar perusal of the Scriptures soon shook off its attachment and credulity to saintly mythology <sup>63</sup>.

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The legend was the necessary appendage to these superstitions. Legends. Fable is the natural aliment of fancy, and also its prolific offspring. The monasteries, embracing so large a part of the national population, contained every variety of human character and genius ; and among their diversified fraternity, many individuals of vivid fancy and strong feeling, sometimes even of diseased imaginations. Their legendary tales were therefore numerous, and sometimes highly impressive <sup>64</sup>. They powerfully aided the cause of superstition, and

may

<sup>63</sup> The ignorance of the clergy was a leading cause of their superstitions, not their impostures. In 1287, the synod of Exeter declared, that ignorance, the mother of all vices, was to be chiefly avoided. It therefore enjoined every archdeacon to inquire diligently what rectors, vicars or priests, suffered an "enormum defectum" in literature. We may form a notion of this enormous defect, when we find, that all that was exacted of the parish priests was, they should

know the ten commandments, and be able to explain to the people the seven mortal sins, the seven sacraments, and the creeds. Wilk. Conc. vol. 2. p. 144.

<sup>64</sup> The Histories of Bede and Matthew Paris may be read for specimens of the legends of the day. They are favourable specimens, because they are both honest writers, and meant to state the truth, as far as they knew or believed it.

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may have contributed something to the growth of our narrative and romantic poetry. No saint was created without a competent addition of legends to his life. But the progress of human nature has suffered by this practice. The biography of many of the worthy and superior persons, of both sexes and of all conditions, who have earnestly professed the Roman Catholic religion, would have done honour to piety and virtue, and have promoted these qualities in others, if it had been simply and truly narrated; but, disfigured and falsified by the fictitious drapery and machinery with which they are accompanied, the lives of the saints cannot be preserved without vitiating our moral taste, and destroying all our preference for historical veracity. The power assumed by the pope, of creating saints, was one of the boldest invasions of the rights of the Supreme, and an actual superseding of that final judgment which has been announced impartially to all. The pope's bull of canonization placed the dead individual, not only immediately in heaven, but in that high character in heaven, that to him mortal prayers were to be addressed, because he would procure from the Deity, for his supplicant, the favours he desired. It was therefore a species not only of beatification, but of inferior deification—it was an arrogated power of creating a celestial nobility—and one of the most certain paths of attaining this proud distinction, was a zealous devotion to the interests of the Papal See. Our Thomas à Becket had no other claim. Saint Dunstan, Saint Dominic, Saint Francis, and Saint Ignatius—had they any more<sup>65</sup>?

Human

<sup>65</sup> The Pope and his clergy might with some truth, as to their assumed power, adopt the inscription of the gate of Dante's Inferno:—

Per me si va nella città dolente :

Per me si va nell' eterno dolore :

Per me si va tra la perdita gente.

Infern. Cant. 3.

To those who were disobedient or rebellious to them, it was haughtily and sternly announced—

Lasciate ogni speranza, Voi, che' entrate.

Ib,



Human policy never invented a more powerful engine for the arbitrary government of mankind<sup>66</sup>, than the doctrine of a purgatorial state. The final judgment of the human race had been declared by its Redeemer to be his prerogative and office; and therefore of this, no sophistry could divest him. But an intermediate purgatory, being the fiction of the Catholic hierarchy, could be shaped and administered, diminished or extended, as the priesthood chose. The duration of this state was found to be as manageable as the language which expressed it, and was made to be entirely subservient to the will of the priest. It was he alone who pronounced, or could explore, whether the dying individual would have to endure an hundred, a thousand, or tens of thousand years of penal fire. It was the rites, machinery, and payments, which he dictated, which had the talismanic power of abridging or determining the appointed portion. Wherever this doctrine was believed, the priest had the mind of his votary bound in an adamant chain. To have any prospect of comfort after death, it was necessary that the priest and church should be propitiated. This at last became so well understood, and so completely organized, that some monasteries and churches had their settled tables of necessary offices and pecuniary payments, each of which was potent enough to resist a certain portion of the purgatorial pains<sup>67</sup>. To every mass for the dead, a power of abolishing a determinate number of days or years of this probationary fire was allotted, and these masses were to be purchased by proportionate liberalities.

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Purgatory.

<sup>66</sup> It has been supposed that this doctrine originated from the Pagan theory, of the purification of departed souls by fire. Mosheim's Ecc. Hist. Cent. 5. vol. 2. p. 40.

<sup>67</sup> We have an instance how particular monasteries endeavoured to attract popularity from this source, in the fragment published by Hearne:—"Here begynneth the pardon of the monastery of Shene, which is Syen:

First, every day in the ere, hosumever cometh to the saide monastery devoutly geving sumwhat to the reparacions of the saide monastery, and say five pater nosters, and five aves, and a crede, shall have CCCCC daies of pardon—and alsoo, hosumever saith devoutely our lady's sauter in the saide monastery, shall have CCCCC days of pardonne." Hearne's Fordun, p. 1399.

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ralities. The rich and great had therefore always the power, of making the first æras of the next world, as pleasant to them as the present. The poor were less secure ; and their absolute obedience and servile ductility, were the only means by which they could procure safety. This was one of the causes of the rich donations to monasteries and churches, which made the Catholic foundations so affluent and powerful <sup>68</sup>.

We may smile with the contempt of superiority, to behold our forefathers trembling at fictions of their fancy, and to find the proudest and the most turbulent of human beings eagerly lavishing their wealth to adorn churches, found monasteries, and to have masses sung for ages after they were in the tomb, with the hope of shortening their residence in this imaginary state. But let us in justice to them recollect, that though they erred in applying it, yet the principle of their belief was right ; and consonant with the conduct of human reason, in every age and in every region of its existence. The unknown future has every where been contemplated with awe, and nothing can erase the feeling from the human heart, but the theory—that there will be none—that we are but like the beasts that perish—and that when we quit the life of this world, we cease to be for ever. But although this supposition—as gratuitous at least, and, as to any authority for it, as arbitrary a fiction, as the tortures of Ixion or the fire of purgatory—has been adorned with all the high colouring of poetry, and all the arguments of misdirected ingenuity ; yet it is too revolting to

<sup>68</sup> Lady Clare, who died 1360, leaves £. 140. to sing masses for the souls of her three husbands, herself, and servants. She also bequeaths 100 marcs, to find five men at arms to serve in the Holy Land, for her husband's soul and her own. Royal and Noble Wills, 29. So the earl of Hereford, who died 1361, bequeaths 300 marcs of silver, to sing masses

for his soul. Ib. p. 46. The Royal and Noble Wills, published by Mr. Nicholls, abound with legacies of plate, jewels, rich clothes, furniture and money, given by great personages to ecclesiastical persons and places. The Black Prince bequeathed the great table of gold, already noticed in this History ; see before, p. 177.



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to our best reasoned hopes, too contradictory to the unceasing improveability of our intellectual principle, too irreconcilable with the general wisdom and goodness visible in creation, too unconso-latory, too unpalatable, and too brutalizing in its tendency, to gain an extensive or a lasting settlement in the human mind<sup>69</sup>. But if we shall survive the present state, who can be responsible to us for what our next existence may experience? Hence, it was not in their anxiety for their destiny after death, that our ances-tors erred, for he only is reasonable who has a rational solicitude about it; but it was in their supposing that a priest or a pope had any influence over it, that our pious forefathers deluded their own good sense, and trembled before phantoms of unauthorized imagination, of gratuitous supposition, created by beings as im-potent and as ignorant as themselves. We may read Dante, to feast on the terrible beauties of his sublime and pathetic fancy; but if we should be so absurd as to mistake the poet for an apostle, we degrade our understanding, and wilfully torment our-selves with chimeras of our own painting<sup>70</sup>. Our ancestors believed what they were told, because they had neither books enough, nor sufficient accumulated knowledge, nor proper instructors, to enable them to judge accurately of the pretensions of their clergy, or of the foundations of their doctrines. But when the means of judg-ment occurred, no nation more eagerly studied, or more resolutely and

<sup>69</sup> If a Lucretius were to station himself on the shore of a dark and boundless sea, on which all mankind must venture; and, while they were anxiously seeking some safe vessel to sail in, some cautious pilots to guide them, or some information on the nature and consequences of the mysterious passage, should employ himself in urging them to plunge boldly in and perish, because he was sure that they must all be drowned for ever, and therefore that all thought and caution

were useless; in what light, considering his utter ignorance on the subject, the evils that, notwithstanding his assertions, may occur to us, and the impossibility of his giving us any security against them—In what light should we consider him?

<sup>70</sup> Dante, in his "Purgatorio," has pre-sented this Catholic tenet in its least ob-noxious shape, and combined with much fine poetry and sweet versification.

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Confession  
and abso-  
lution.

and temperately applied them. They broke the bandages of their superstitions, the first moment that they were truly qualified to do so ; and they devoted themselves, with benevolent zeal, to communicate to others the illumination which they had attained.

The practice of confession, and the power of priestly absolution, were efficacious instruments of human government, and perhaps useful auxiliaries to human virtue, in that age, though delicacy, sensibility and reason, shrink from them now. When once the priest became master of the secret vices of an individual family, he had that family entirely under his command ; and the dread of being so circumstanced, kept many moral. Disclosure of the secrets of confession was indeed forbidden under severe penalties : but, independently of the power of appointing the adapted penance, and of giving or withholding the coveted absolution, the means of alarm and injury which the knowledge of actions involving often life, property and reputation, inevitably gave to the priest, even without betraying his trust ; and the personal shame at the consciousness of his knowledge ; were abundantly sufficient to subject the sinner submissively to his control. The importance of the possession of this source of influence and government was so well understood among the Romish clergy, that it was one of the first privileges eagerly desired and obtained by the mendicant orders, and most fiercely contended for by the parochial clergy, from whom they took it<sup>71</sup>. But even these obnoxious customs were important to the moral government of the fierce, powerful, and untutored savage of the middle ages. When every baron was a petty sovereign, absolute in his own domain, governing by his lance and sword, and commanding a servile population as magisterially, and often as sternly, as West-India slave-owners their unfortunate property ; what could train him to any tolerable observance

<sup>71</sup> See Matt. Paris, pp. 419. 611, 612. 693 & 694.



observance of moral order or duties, but this sovereignty of his priests, as absolute and as domineering as his own. While he was in health, he despised and oppressed them. It was often not till he began to shake in the ague, or to groan in the fever, or became helpless in the palsy, that he admitted them to influence him; and as he had no more cultivated reason than they had, or more intelligent agency, he could be only governed by the strong and palpable machinery to which they subjected him. The servility of the world, and the gain thence resulting to the clergy, led them to abuse their power by trafficking with indulgences beforehand; thus enabling the rich to buy impunity anterior to their sin, and tempting them to vice by the anticipating pardon. Reason once awakened, was not long insensible to this abuse; and this, like all the other superstitions of the Romish clergy, perished from its own folly<sup>72</sup>.

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That the sacramental bread and wine became, after the consecrating words of the priest, the actual flesh and blood of our Saviour, was in the eleventh century the belief of the great majority of the European clergy; and that the Pope, in then fixing it in the catholic creed, acted in conformity with the wishes of the majority of the clergy at that period, cannot be fairly disputed. But that it was not the indispensable belief of the Christian world before this æra, but had been repeatedly contested, and without exciting any official hostility before, is equally clear. In the eleventh century, Berengarius excited a serious controversy about it; in which he was overpowered as much by his sacerdotal brethren, as by the papal authority. If we ask, why the clergy

Transubstan-  
tiation.

at

<sup>72</sup> We have an instance of this recorded by a Monkish Chronieler of Richard II. When the duke of Lancaster went to Spain, the Pope, as he deemed the Spaniards "schismatici," because not friendly to him, gave the pardon of sins to all who would accom-

pany Lancaster. The Monk adds, "But this frequent pardon and granting of indulgencies had become so vile and despicable, "viluit et sordebat," among the people, that there were few who adopted this crusade." Monk of Evesham, p. 70.

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at that time, when knowledge began to dawn, should so zealously have struck down the emerging advocates of common sense on this subject? we must refer it to that interior feeling of its important consequences, which one of the popes so unguardedly expressed, when he declared, that it was execrable, that a priest, who by his ministration could create the Creator of all things, should do homage to kings<sup>73</sup>. In the same spirit, and without seeing its inconsistency with the above sentiment, pope Paschal said, it was monstrous that man should create God; and therefore, as priests were called gods in scripture<sup>74</sup>, they were not to be invested by sovercigns. The inference was irresistible. If the clergy were indeed possessed of the power of creating the very Deity whom they worshipped, they became by their office a supernatural order of men. They could do that, of which angels were incapable<sup>75</sup>. They were indeed workers of miracles; and Becket became reasonable in treating them as if they were angels or divine personages, whenever they came before him<sup>76</sup>.

The

<sup>73</sup> Eadmer, p. 53.

<sup>74</sup> See the Pope's letter to Henry, in Eadmer, p. 61.

<sup>75</sup> So the Pope remarked, "*quod nulli Angelorum concessum est.*" Eadmer, p. 53. It is observable now at the catholic high mass, what reverences and respect are paid by the other priests to the priest who performs the chief ceremony. He is repeatedly bowed to, and the lappet of his vestment twice held up; and he is also incensed by them, apparently on account of the miracle which he is supposed to be producing.

<sup>76</sup> In the *Magnum Chronicon Belgicum*, there is an amusing instance of the extent to which this doctrine was carried, and of the credulity with which the most absurd stories concerning it were received and recorded. In 1306, a woman of Paris pledged her best gown with a Jew. When Easter-

day drew near, she wished to be as fine as her neighbours, and, as she could not redeem the gown, she earnestly entreated him to lend it to her till the Monday, promising to pay double interest for the favour: He refused, unless she swore to him to bring the host to him, which she would that day receive from the priest. At first she refused to do a thing so horrible; but her vanity overcoming every other consideration, she agreed to keep the host in her mouth unswallowed, and to deliver it to him. She had her gown, and brought the consecrated wafer. The Jew eagerly seized it, and exclaiming, "Art thou the God of the Christians? art thou he whom their mad credulity believes to have been born of the virgin? If thou art he whom my fathers crucified, I will boil thee!" and he threw it into a vessel of boiling water. Immediately a beautiful boy appeared in it!

The



The power of excommunication and interdict was one of the most subtle in its device, the most penal in its operation, the most tyrannical in its principle, and the greatest tax on the credulity of mankind, that political ambition invented. The curses that were often attached to them, are too loathsome to repeat. Happily they became so frequently misused, as to rouse the indignation and contempt of mankind; and, although they may still subsist in name, they are sinking fast into oblivion, from the abhorrence and ridicule of every feeling and reasoning individual.

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Interdict.

It would occupy too large a portion of this Work, to detail all the false opinions and systems which prevailed in the Christian world, under the patronage, and sometimes by the command, of the papal hierarchy. They will be found in the writings of our first Reformers, who so boldly and successfully attacked them; and to them we must refer the more curious reader. It will be sufficient to the present Work, to have thus touched on the more prominent and characterizing features; and it only remains to give a few moments of attention to that great portion of our ecclesiastical population, which the monastic institution comprized.

In the history of the Anglo-Saxons, we found that Dunstan and his sovereign Edgar had filled England with a taste for monks and monasteries, and that the king boasted, as a merit, that he had built forty-seven of these conventual edifices<sup>77</sup>. The Danish dynasties

Monasteries.

The Jew, instead of being converted by the miracle, seized a fork, and tried to keep him under the water. But when he thought he had him in the middle, the figure was at the side; and thus whenever the Jew struck at him in one place, he always saw him in another. The Jew and the figure thus kept struggling with each other till his children heard the bustle, and came to see what it was. Frightened, they ran in the street to tell the wonder. The people eagerly came

in, and saw the Jew still carrying on the conflict. The bishop of Paris, and all the clergy, then followed, and found the host still in the boiling water. They released it out of the hands of this inexorable Jew, and carried it in procession to the church of St. John de Gravia at Paris, 'where it is kept to this day,' says my fully-believing author. *Mag. Chron. Belg.* p. 268. ed. Pistori.

<sup>77</sup> See *Hist. Angl. Sax.* vol. i. p. 398.

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dynasties intercepted this peculiar enthusiasm; and, during the reign of Edward the Confessor, such a change had taken place in the religious humour of the Anglo-Saxons, that the monastic profession fell into disrepute, and the monasteries were suffered to decay into unlamented ruin<sup>78</sup>.

The bishops appointed by William after the Norman Conquest, continuing the same disposition, endeavoured to remove the remaining monks from the residencies they occupied, and to supply their places by the untensured clergy<sup>79</sup>. If their plan had succeeded, monkery might have disappeared from England, and the papal hierarchy would have lost one of the greatest instruments of its predominance; but Europe would, in that case, not have so rapidly, if at all, attained either the civilization or the literature which these establishments imparted. The archbishops were beginning to discontinue their dependence on Rome<sup>80</sup>; many of the clergy married<sup>81</sup>; and even the monks who continued in the country, were diverging fast into the habits of the laity<sup>82</sup>. These habits were becoming so prevalent, that it was found necessary to degrade an archbishop, for his excessive fondness for hunting and bird-fighting<sup>83</sup>. Noblemen were hearing divine service in their bed-chambers instead of the churches, and practising their vices while their careless clergy were looking on, and verbally praying in a language which they neither understood nor could pronounce, and general habits of dissoluteness and inebriety pervaded the country. Hence, if the Norman Conquest had not occurred, religion would have expired in England, or have sunk to that combination of ceremonies and sensuality, which the Paganism of antiquity had displayed in its declining state.

The progress of this change was arrested by Lanfranc, whom,

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<sup>78</sup> Eadmer, p. 4. Lanf. Vita, p. 8.

<sup>79</sup> Eadmer, p. 10.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. p. 5.

<sup>81</sup> Lanfranc's Opera, p. 301. Malm. 228.

<sup>82</sup> Eadmer, 5. Malm. 214.

<sup>83</sup> Malm. 109.



on account of his personal merit, William had called out of Normandy to the See of Canterbury. He began this new dignity by endeavouring to obtain his pallium without going to Rome. The policy of the papal court, which had experienced the vast importance to its influence in other countries, of making their prelates come personally to Rome, refused this indulgence; and Lanfranc was compelled to go to Italy. From that period his conduct became adapted to the counsels of the Vatican. After that visit, he would neither consecrate nor perform any act without first consulting the Pope<sup>84</sup>. He referred to Rome the dispute he had with the See of York for precedency. He suffered the Pope to convene by his precept, in England, a council of the English prelates, to determine points of discipline arising in that country<sup>85</sup>; and the Pope was so satisfied with his docility, that he wrote to William to exhort him to acquiesce in the advice of Lanfranc<sup>86</sup>.

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The monks of Europe had systematically received the peculiar countenance of the court of Rome. In no point did personal interest and the public welfare more unite at this period, than in the encouragement of monasteries. Barbarous Europe had still to be taught letters, to be civilized, and to be made moral. Monks only would acquire the literature and preserve the true religious feeling that was wanted. The world was a world of violence and battle, of the grossest manners, and the most benighted ignorance. Their religion was a nomenclature of superstitious ceremonies. Their moral code, passion, power, and self-will. To withdraw in every district a certain portion of the population from the evil habits of the day; and to subject them, by constant tuition, habit, and hourly practices, to stated exercises of devotion, to religious meditation,

<sup>84</sup> Lanf. Op. p. 301.

<sup>85</sup> Wilk. Concil. vol. 1. p. 323.

<sup>86</sup> Lanf. Op. p. 326.

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meditation, to that negative virtue which the absence of vice, temptation, and opportunity produces; and to those ascetic self-restraints which the monastic discipline compels; was to begin a new description of moral character, which, though not the best exemplar of human virtue, was the best that was then attainable. The religious savage is always melancholy, severe, formal, and extravagant in his religion, because he can be no other: he must be civilized into reason, sensibility, and happiness, before his faith will bear the characters of intelligence; or his devotion display the emotions of gratitude and love. The monk was the best religionist that could then be manufactured, both for his own improvement, and also for his beneficial operation on his fierce contemporaries. The Anglo-Norman monk suited the Anglo-Norman baron, and was the only sort of Christian minister that could have instructed or controlled him. The common clergy would have secularized into laity, as they were doing, when Lanfranc saved religion from its shipwreck. Monasteries, therefore, grew out of the necessities of the day, and were efficacious instruments of the national melioration, till better agents arose.

Lanfranc was a sincere believer, and wished to benefit the country over which he presided. He was shocked at its immoralities and irreligion, and he patronized the monastic clergy for their practical utilities. Hence, when the Pope wrote to him, enjoining him to resist the efforts made at Canterbury against the monks, Lanfranc eagerly obeyed his spiritual lord. He did more; he reformed their relaxed system; he caused the old monasteries to be repaired, and new ones to be constructed. He composed himself a code of monastic constitutions, which has descended to us. By his exertions, he established a new fashion in the island in their favour; and from his time to the Reformation, England swarmed with



with monks, till they became as pernicious as they had once been beneficial.

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On perusing Lanfranc's monkish code, we can have no difficulty in perceiving that it tends to form, not intellectual, but mechanical devotion. It does not educate an intelligent being to love and adore the great source of his existence with grateful reason, but it carves out a cowed automaton. There is no provision for moulding the heart, for meliorating the temper, for guiding and improving the feelings, or for enlarging and informing the mind. The man is considered as a piece of clock-work. Ritual devotion is to be the duty and purpose of his existence, and he is moved every hour of every day to the same specific actions, with unvaried monotony. Certain appropriated movements are to be performed daily between October and Advent, certain others between Advent and Lent—others again during Lent, and others in Passion Week, at Easter, Whitsuntide, and afterwards. These motions consist of rising at appointed times, putting on and off their garments, singing peculiar hymns, reading selected chapters, visiting specified places, saying particular prayers, and performing prescribed actions on fixed signals, one hour after another, till the day is consumed by the wearisome and debilitating uniformity. But there is scarcely any thing enjoined, which a piece of mechanism could not be constructed to do, if art could make it vocal.

Thus, called from their beds before day-break, they are to go in their night-clothes to the church, to sing; thence to the cloister, and hear the boys read, till the bell tolls for them to put on their shoes. They are to pass to the dormitory for their day-dress, and to the washing-house to wash. They are to comb themselves; and when the great bell sounds, they must enter the

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church to receive the holy water. On the signal of another bell, they are to pray; and of another bell, to sing; and afterwards to proceed to the altar, to say or hear mass. They were again to dress themselves, and to return to the choir, to sit there till the bell summoned them to the chapter-house. On another signal, they were to resort to the refectory. After a certain hour, no one was to speak till the children left the monastery; then, when the bell sounded again, their shoes were to be taken off, their hands to be washed, and they were to enter the church, to repeat the Litany, and to hear high mass. At another signal, they were to go in procession. When the bell vibrated again, they were to pray, and afterwards to revisit the refectory. Some were then to sit in the choir, and they, who liked, might read. At a fresh signal, the nones were to be sung. Similar tasks were to succeed again in allotted order, till they were dismissed to their bed<sup>87</sup>. Even their shaving and blood-letting were governed by fixed rules<sup>88</sup>. In the repetition of these habits passed all their time, with the slight variation of a few additional ceremonies at other seasons of the year. All these formularies seem to us better calculated to produce a technical religion of the limbs and voice, than that intelligent piety of the heart which is the noblest homage of man to his Creator, and the best parent of the virtues that are the most serviceable to our fellow-creatures. Hence, when the first enthusiasm passed away, and monasteries became wealthy, they are reproached for uniting with their mechanical devotion the most corrupted luxury. Some of their minds, too lofty to be sensual, took the direction of a proud and subtle ambition,

<sup>87</sup> See Lanfr. Opera, pp. 254—292.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. pp. 283, 284.—His orders for the hospitium, the eleemosynarius, and infirmarius, pp. 281, 282, are interesting: And

see those on the itinerant brethren, p. 285; on the novices, p. 287; and on the schools, p. 292.



ambition, that was more dangerous to the national peace, and not at all more favourable to individual virtue. CHAP. I.

But these practices constituted a species of sanctity, that appeared wonderful to the ignorance and animal habits of the worldly population. Their dissimilarity to common life was impressive. Their singularities were the more venerable, even for their uselessness, for that is the character of superstitious rites. Their unintelligibility, in an ignorant age, increases the belief of their magical efficacy; and the monk, with his routine of conventual offices, like the Roman priest with his genuflexions and theatrical motions, seemed the more mysterious and awful to the lawless baron, the warrior-knight, and the staring vulgar. What our enlightened times deem mummary and form, the dark ages revered. We require the reason to be convinced, and the heart to be moved; they were satisfied if their senses were forcibly struck, and their imagination excited. The superstitious and the ignorant are easily governed by superstition, and, while their mental malady lasts, usually prefer it. The attention of the monks to agricultural cultivation greatly increased the produce of their landed property, and gave them an abundance<sup>89</sup>, which, after filling their establishments with costly furniture and precious jewels and vestments, seduced them to luxury, vice, unpopularity, and ruin<sup>90</sup>.

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The

<sup>89</sup> We have one incident, on which we may calculate their growing wealth. In Edward the Second's reign, the Abbey of Croyland was for a time, during a vacancy, in the king's hands. It then contained 41 monks, 15 *corrodarii*, and 36 *servitores* and *ministri*. The allowance ordered from the exchequer, for their maintenance, was sixpence a day to the prior, three-pence to each of the monks and *corrodarii*, and two-pence to the others. The residue of the income was retained by

the king, and it produced him £.8. 1. 6. a week. Hist. Croyland, Gale Script. vol. 1. p. 482. The allowances to them would be £.7. 3. 6. a week; so that their maintenance did not amount to half their revenues, in this monastery. Their charity to the poor was usually in provisions, and entirely at their own discretion.

<sup>90</sup> Dugdale, in his *Προπυλαιον* to his *Monasticon*, gives much information on the English monasteries.

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The monasteries, like the papacy, produced their full share of usefulness in their day. The monks were unwearied collectors and transcribers of books; and to their libraries and copyists we owe the preservation of most of the classics which we possess<sup>91</sup>. For nearly all the literature, science, and education of Europe, from the Gothic irruptions to the fourteenth century, we are indebted to them. Building their monasteries in woods and deserts, they occasioned the cultivation of many uninhabitable districts, and towns and villages rapidly grew up and multiplied under their fostering patronage<sup>92</sup>. So prone were the monks to husbandry, that in founding an abbey at Caen, William the Conqueror made it a restriction in their charter, that they should not destroy the woods for the sake of agriculture, and he reserved to himself the wild beasts<sup>93</sup>. In time of war and trouble, the monasteries became the depository of the property of the neighbourhood, and the asylum of endangered persons<sup>94</sup>. They were the main teachers of the morality of the age; and, though it was greatly discoloured by superstition, it was a treasure of good to the warlike savages whom it civilized. For nearly two centuries after the Conquest, there was little peace or mental improvement beyond the monastery. It then became the natural resort of the gentle, the mild, the quiet, and the studious. It was voluntarily chosen by many men of great talents, piety, rank, and worldly business; and when monks were so popular as to take the lead in the important transactions of life, their walls contained frequently a collection of intellectual and cultivated society, which could at

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<sup>91</sup> Thus the first six books of the Annals of Tacitus, after a diligent search all over Europe, were found in the monastery of Corbey, on the Weser.

<sup>92</sup> Thus the celebrated abbey of Fulda was founded in a "locus sylvaticus, in eremo

vastissimæ solitudinis," says Boniface. Mag Bib. vol. 16. pp. 115. 121. Three instances of this sort may be seen in Du Chesne's Norm. Script. pp. 236. 458. 464.

<sup>93</sup> See the Charter, Lanfr. Op. not. p. 27.

<sup>94</sup> Ingulf. Hist.



that time be paralleled no where else. They repeatedly supplied the government with money, by the loan of actual supplies, or of their plate and jewels to obtain it from the money-brokers. They nourished the improving energies of society, till they themselves were far outstripped by the progress, which, though they had principally occasioned, they could never overtake. They, like the popedom and its artificial system, were but temporary good; and fame, not present influence, or re-established power, is their proper reward<sup>95</sup>.

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I.ORIGIN OF  
THE ECCLE-  
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SYSTEM IN  
ENGLAND.<sup>95</sup> NOTEON THE PROFANE FESTIVALS AND CUSTOMS CONTINUED  
UNDER CHRISTIANITY.

WE may infer the inevitable corruption of practical Christianity in the middle ages, from the obstinate attachment of the converted barbarians to their ancient Pagan customs, and the allowed continuance of many by the Catholic clergy. Boniface complained of German priests, who would continue, although Christians, to sacrifice bulls and goats to the heathen idols. Mag. Bib. vol. 16. p. 113. The Pope, in answer to Boniface's rebuke, for permitting Pagan practices at Rome on new-year's day, in the eighth century, only remarks, that they are detestable, and that he will take care not to attend them; but does not, because he could not, suppress them. Ib. p. 117.—We find from other writers, that about the beginning of every year, it was a favourite and general custom to dress themselves like wild beasts, some like mares, and some like female deer, others like male animals, for the worst purposes. Some put on the entire skin of the beast they meant to represent; some only the head; and thus, pretending to be transformed into the animal, they acted like it,

practising what one writer calls '*sordidissimam turpitudinem*,' and another, '*nefanda et ridiculosa*.' See Du Cange, Gloss. voc. Cervula.

At midsummer, they celebrated the summer solstice with customs that are called '*dæmonium ludos et nefandas saltationes*.' Du Cange, voc. Caraula.

The wiser clergy certainly attempted to suppress these abominations; but, rather than lose their strange proselytes, they appointed some of their own festivals to be celebrated at the same time, and much in the same manner, in order to be equally attractive; as we have remarked of Gregory in our own island (See before, p. 341.) The result of this seems to have been a worse corruption; for the clergy then joined in the Pagan immoralities, and connected them with Christianity. Hence the feast of the Hypodiaconi, the Sub-deacons, Sou-diacres; which was soon from the fact converted into a pun, to mean also Diacres Saouls, or the drunken deacons.

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From Beletus, who lived in 1182, we find that this festum Hypodiaconorum, called also the Feast of Fools (*stultorum*) was celebrated by some on new-year's day, by some on twelfth day, by some the week following. He says that laymen appeared with the monastic tonsure; and that some put on episcopal garments, to represent bishops. One was made the chief prelate, on whom every thing that was ludicrous was practised. The elections, the promotions, and the consecration of the bishops and the sacerdotal order, were treated with insult, attacks, and acute abuse. These licentious festivities were called the December Liberties, and seem to have begun at one of the most solemn seasons of the Christian year, and to have lasted through the chief part of January. Beletus remarks, that bishops and archbishops themselves joined with their inferiors in the sport. We find it prevailing even in one of the chief metropolitan cities of France; for he adds, "Though the great churches, like that of Rheims, observe this custom, it would seem to be more laudable that it should not indulge such sports." Du Cange, *voc. Kalendæ*.

In 1444, we find it still in France, though then discountenanced, and thus described: "The priests and clergy create an archbishop, or a bishop, or a pope, of fools, and so call him. Putting on faces of monsters, in the time of his celebrating the divine office, or, clothed like women or minstrels, they begin dances, sing abominable songs, eat rich puddings on the corner of the altar, near where mass is celebrating, play at dice there, incense it with a fœtid smoke of burnt old shoes, and run leaping about over all the church." *Ib.*—That this immoral folly was practised in England, is indicated by the inventory of the York Monastery, taken so lately as in 1530, containing even then a small mitre, with pebble-stones, for the bishop of the boys; also a ring for him, and two archys, one in the middle, like a cross," &c. Du Cange, *ib.*—The Council at

Paris, in 1209, forbad archbishops to attend the Feast of Fools. Du Pin, *Eccl. Hist.* 13th Cent.

In the *Gemma Animæ* it is confessed, that the processions with lighted tapers on the Purification of the Virgin, was adopted from the custom of the Pagans, who in the same month always went round their cities with lights. Honor. August. ap. Bib. Pat. vol. 10. p. 1266.—He also states, that on the festival of St. Blaise, the faithful burnt lights for their houses or animals, because an old woman having entered his prison with a light and some food, he told her, that after his death if she burnt a candle to his memory, and gave alms, she should never want. From her the custom spread through all the church. *Ib.* p. 1266.

The feast of St. Peter ad Vincula was instituted to supersede a splendid Pagan festival, celebrated every year on that day, to commemorate the victory of Augustus over Antony at Actium. Du Cange, p. 401.—It could be only by rivalling the Pagan revelries, that the Christian ceremonies could gain the ascendancy.

The feast of St. Peter epularum was a competition with another heathen celebration. On that day of February, the Pagans brought banquets to the tombs of their parents, which they believed that dæmons or wandering souls consumed at night. Christianity, unable to suppress the custom, compounded with it, by giving it a Christian name and dress. Du Cange, *Gloss.* vol. 2. p. 401.

The most absurd of these feasts, and which, as if intended to be a complete burlesque on Christianity, was celebrated on the birthday of our Saviour, was the Feast of Asses. Du Cange gives a list of all the lessons and hymns which were read and chanted in mock devotion on this occasion, p. 402.—Mr. Millin has given an account of it, from the Missal composed by an archbishop of Sens, who died in 1222; which has been thus abstracted:—

"On the eve of the day appointed to celebrate it, before the beginning of vespers, the clergy



clergy went in procession to the door of the cathedral, where were two choristers singing in a minor key, or rather with squeaking voices,

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Lux hodie, lux letitiæ, me judice, tristis  
Quisquis erit, removendus erit, solemnibus istis.  
Sicut hodie, procul invidiæ, procul omnia mæsta  
Læta volunt, quicumque celibret asinaria festa.

Light to-day, the light of joy—I banish every sorrow;  
Wherever found, be it expell'd from our solemnities to-morrow.  
Away be strife and grief and care, from ev'ry anxious breast;  
And all be joy and glee in those who keep the Ass's Feast.

“ After this anthem, two canons were deputed to fetch the Ass, and to conduct him to the table, which was the place where the great chanter sat, to read the order of the ceremonies, and the names of those who were to take any part in them. The animal was clad with precious priestly ornaments, and in this array was solemnly conducted to the middle of the choir; during which procession, the following hymn was sung in a major key. The first and last stanzas of it were,

Orientis partibus  
Adventabit asinus,  
Pulcher et fortissimus,  
Sarcinis aptissimus.  
Hez, Sire Ane, Hez! &c. &c.

Amen dicas, asine!  
Jam satias de gramine.  
Amen; Amen; itera  
Aspernare vetera.

Hez, Sire Ane, Hez!

These have been thus englished:

From the country of the East  
Came this strong and handsome beast,  
This able Ass—beyond compare,  
Heavy loads and packs to bear.  
Huzza, Seignior Ass, Huzza!

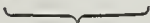
Amen! bray, most honour'd Ass,  
Sated now with grain and grass:  
Amen repeat, Amen reply,  
And disregard antiquity.  
Huzza, Seignior Ass, Huzza!

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“ After this the office began by an anthem in the same style, sung purposely in the most discordant manner possible. The office itself lasted the whole of the night, and part of the next day: it was a rhapsody of whatever was sung in the course of the year at the appropriated festivals, forming altogether the strangest and most ridiculous medley that can be conceived. As it was natural to suppose that the choristers and the congregation should feel thirst, in so long a performance, wine was distributed in no sparing manner. The signal for that part of the ceremony was an anthem, commencing, *Conductus ad poculum*, &c. (Brought to the glass, &c.)

“ The first evening, after vespers, the grand chanter of Sens headed the jolly band in the streets, preceded by an enormous lantern. A vast theatre was prepared for their reception before the church, where they performed not the most decent interludes. The singing and dancing were concluded by throwing a pail of water on the head of the grand chanter. They then returned to the church, to begin the morning office; and on that occasion, several received on their naked bodies a number of pails of water. At the respective divisions of the service, great care was taken to supply the Ass with drink and provender. In the middle of it, a signal was given by an anthem, *Conductus ad ludos*, &c. (Brought to play, &c.) and the Ass was conducted into the nave of the church,

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church, where the people, mixed with the clergy, danced round him, and strove to imitate his braying. When the dancing was over, the Ass was brought back again into the choir, where the clergy terminated the festival.

“The vespers of the second day concluded with an invitation to dinner, in the form of an anthem like the rest, *Conductus ad Prandium, &c.* (Brought to Dinner, &c.) And the festival ended by a repetition of

similar theatricals to those which had taken place the day before.”

How much these licentious absurdities must have diminished the moral uses and influence of Christianity, especially when the priesthood itself was a part of the actors, may be easily conceived.—It is probable that in these festivals we see some of the most ancient idolatrous rites.



# HISTORY

## OF

# E N G L A N D.

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## C H A P. II.

HISTORY OF THE PRINCIPAL ATTACKS ON PAPAL  
CHRISTIANITY, FROM THE EIGHTH CENTURY TO  
THE FOURTEENTH.

**T**HAT the papal system of Christianity, however jealously guarded by self-interest, and supported by the united forces of the executive government, and the great wealth of the ecclesiastical bodies, would not enjoy the stable continuity to which it aspired, might have been anticipated, if the great truth had then been known or attended to, that whatever obstructs the improvement of human nature, must ultimately be overthrown by the energies of its improving principle. As the fourteenth century evolved, this form of Christianity had effected, at least in England, all the good of which it was capable, and its alteration became necessary to human progress. The opposing agencies which its original imperfections had first excited into activity, the vices of its maturity now raised into vigorous and unceasing operation; and it fell before their hostilities, as soon as the mind of society had been sufficiently educated to be bettered by its departure.

CHAP.  
II.

The difficulty to be provided for in all great changes is, that

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while

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while the evil is removing, the good should not be lost, which all old systems possess. The fervent belief of Christianity was a good not easy to be reproduced if once destroyed. Its genuine doctrines and precepts were so many attained points of sacred knowledge, for which, if once expelled from the human thought, there was no substitute to be supplied ; and yet the false opinions had been so long and so much identified with the true, that to abolish the one, was inevitably to shake the other. This danger upheld papal Christianity, till it became so incompatible with human improvement, that its continuance was as mischievous as any evils that could follow from its overthrow. And by that time other agencies became applicable, which would tend to diminish the mischiefs that might have followed. Till these agencies were ready, the first efforts to reform were suffered to be unsuccessful. But when all the springs and checks were duly organized to make the resulting consequences beneficial, the abolition of the papal system took place in every country, that could be benefited by its downfall ; and its melioration was procured in every other. England, never inferior to any country in any path of improvement, was among the first that was emancipated. We will attempt to mark the leading causes of this momentous event : and of these, the rise of opposing opinions, usually called Heresies, may be first considered.

The history of heresies is indeed often the history of error ; but it is also the history, always of the activity, and sometimes of the progress of the human intellect. Though frequently the product of a restless spirit, acting with injudicious eccentricity ; yet their aim is at improvement. Their inventors may deviate into new errors, in their bold attempts to remove old ones ; and have frequently abandoned what is good, in a vain search after something better ; but they usually originate from the common sense of mankind  
perceiving



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perceiving what is wrong in existing things, and wishing to remove it. It is however easier to observe an impropriety, than to discern its proper cure: the imperfect state of social mind which fosters the defect, prevents even the reformer's intellect from being competent to amend it. In the effort to improve, some new mistake is brought forth to supersede the old one. Imagination is more agile than judgment, and feeling always precedes knowledge. Hence, an old prejudice is frequently attacked by a young absurdity. But the infant folly is more mortal than the veteran error; and the new combinations of thought which appear in new heresies, or soon accompany them, occasion many minds to meditate more liberally and more usefully on its previous stores. The discussions which follow, increase the activity of the intellects which they interest, extend their researches, and sharpen their discrimination. Better feelings and juster views of truth arise, even among the supporters of the existing systems; and, when the vindictive agitation of disturbed habits and endangered interests has subsided, though the innovation be repressed, yet it has urged the social mind to considerable advances, by the investigation which it has provoked, and by the consequences which it has occasioned. It will not be consistent with the object of this Work to detail the various heresies which occurred, or to trace their effects; it will be only necessary to give a connected outline of those more important criticisms and attacks, from which the Roman hierarchy appears to have chiefly suffered.

The occupation of the Western regions of the Roman Empire by the German and Scandinavian barbarians, long prevented any revival of the useless disputes already noticed. They knew nothing, and at first cared nothing, about mind, spirit, or form, or the mode or nature of the Sovereign existence. They saw a wooden cross, or a painted figure, or a mouldering bone, and they prostrated themselves

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themselves before it when desired, in willing and ignorant adoration. They had done so to their Thor and Odin, and to their Irminsul. There was no reason that they should be more difficult under their new discipline. The exorcism of their Christian priest was as natural to them, as their ancient runæ and sorceries of their forefathers; and they believed with all the force of an inherited and contented faith the analogous superstitions, perhaps more pleasing for their new dress, to which they were invited by the Christian missionaries.

Influence of  
Mohamedanism on  
Christianity.

The progress of the Arabian imposture first disturbed the deep serene in which both the priests and the people were with equal sincerity, because with equal ignorance and with equal satisfaction, reposing. From the hour of its portentous birth, Mohamedanism, notwithstanding its own absurdities, was the unceasing censor of perverted Christianity. Based upon its leading tenet, of the unity of the Divine nature; sincere in its devotion, simple in its worship; averse to the complicated mechanism of a gorgeous hierarchy; and emerging into existence and power, when the divine lessons of the Messiah were forgotten amid theological contentions, the veneration of images, the adoration of the cross, the invocations of saints, the deification of the Virgin, and the popularity of legends and relics; it fiercely accused the Christian world of idolatry and infidelity; of folly, superstition, and imposture. It had retained some valuable truths of the patriarchal theism; and so far was fitly corrective of corrupted Christianity, which, by its saints and Virgin, its relics, legends, and traditions, had begun to supersede the Deity, the Scriptures, and our Saviour. It was indeed impossible that the Islam religion, so void of ornament, art, and machinery; so boastful of its superiority, and simplicity; and so resolutely hostile to idolatry in every shape; could stand so long triumphantly prominent to the eye of the wondering



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wondering world, which was practising in its worship almost all that the new critics condemned, without exciting a comparison and censure of the gorgeous superstitions. Even the wild fables of Mohamed, which the meanest Christian could deride, had the good effect of contributing to make other legends ridiculous. That the Mussulman doctrines interested the curious in Europe, we know by the fact, that a French abbot, the friend of St. Bernard, translated the Koran in the twelfth century. The prohibition of Christians serving in Saracen ships, implies that the aversion to intercourse was lessening between the individuals of the two religions; and for the Pope to forbid Saracens having Christian slaves, and to order Saracens to pay tithes<sup>1</sup>, indicates that Saracens were living in Christian countries where the papal orders had force. But the wars and commerce between these two great classes of mankind, their mutual captives and travellers, produced sufficient communication to put the mind of each into a state of operation on the other; especially on a point like that of religion, on which they were so greatly contrasted. It was at least a chronological coincidence, that, after Mohamedanism had been established in Asia, Africa, and Spain; and after the crusades and other intercourse had brought it fully to the consideration of Europe; reforming opinions abounded in its vicinity, and rapidly spread; and a strong dissatisfaction arose at the wealth, pomp, and luxury, of the papal hierarchy. The sciences cultivated by the Spanish Arabs, drew inquisitive men from all parts of Europe to their cities and schools; and these were among the foremost in diffusing new ideas among their contemporaries. Gerbert, one of these students, in the tenth century was bold enough to call the Pope the Anti-Christ<sup>2</sup>. It was from the schools

in

<sup>1</sup> Hoveden, p. 583; and Du Pin, Eccl. Hist. 13th Cent. p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> See Hist. England, vol. i. p. 479.

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in France which he had planted, that Berengarius arose, who attacked Transubstantiation in the succeeding age. The schoolmen, whose inquiries roused the mind of Europe into discussions that never ceased, till Wickliffe appeared, chiefly originated from the studies of the Arabian metaphysics; and Leo, the imperial Iconoclast, was urged to his resolution of destroying the images in the Christian churches, by a native of the country which the Saracens were occupying<sup>3</sup>.

Claude attacks images at Turin.

That the establishment of the Mohamedans in Spain had a direct effect on the minds of many of the Spanish Christians, cannot be doubted. Under their protection, the Jews in Spain boldly attacked Christianity<sup>4</sup>. Two bishops there contended, in the Nestorian and Mussulman spirit, that our Saviour was not the true, but the adopted Son of God<sup>5</sup>; and their opinions spread extensively around them<sup>6</sup>. It was a Spaniard, a disciple of one of these bishops, in the ninth century, Claude, who made a formidable attack, not only on the images and saints of the Catholic church, but on the Pope himself and his sacerdotal authority. Going to Turin, on being appointed its bishop, he found the churches there full of images, that were worshipped as Jupiter had been; and he fearlessly threw them down, though with great personal

\* One Besor, a Syrian. Jones's Hist. Waldenses, p. 254.—Mr. Gibbon justly remarks of Leo, "His education, his reason, perhaps his intercourse with the Jews and Arabs, had inspired the martial peasant with an hatred of images." Hist. vol. 5. c. 49. p. 97.

<sup>4</sup> Julian, the archbishop of Toledo, in his book against the Jews, addressed to king Erugius, about 686, says, that they had caused many 'titubare e fidelium numero.' p. 116. Hence he composed his work to preserve Christianity from the "rabidis Judæorum latratibus." He says they disputed the chro-

nology of the advent "cancerosis sermonibus," and maintained that the Messiah *was* to come.

<sup>5</sup> These were, Felix bishop of Urgal, and Eliphand of Toledo. They were opposed by Paulus, the prelate of Aquileia, about 800, in two works, printed in Mag. Bib. t. 4. pars 1. p. 351, and pars 2. p. 1;—and by Beatus and Etherius, in Asturia, whose answer is in the same collection, pp. 462—568.

<sup>6</sup> Etherius says, that the work of Eliphandus "per publicum in diversis terrarum vulgati sunt partibus." p. 529.



sonal hazard, from the opposition of the popular feelings<sup>7</sup>. He declared, that the relics and bones of saints were not more entitled to reverence, than bones of cattle or pieces of wood<sup>8</sup>. He opposed the superstitious veneration of the cross; disapproved of pilgrimages to Rome; and even ventured to hint, that he was not to be called an apostle who sat in the apostolic chair, but the person who fulfilled apostolic duties<sup>9</sup>. He was eagerly and repeatedly opposed<sup>10</sup>; and, though his opinions made great individual impression, they accomplished no public reformation: but they enlightened the mind of many, who cherished in secret, and transmitted in confidence, his valuable doctrines.

What Claude of Turin failed to accomplish, was attempted in the twelfth century by those persons, who, under various names, of which the most celebrated were the Albigenses and the Waldenses, the Cathari and the Paterini, at the very period when the predominance of the papal monarchy seemed to be most firmly established in Europe, began to prepare the human mind to overthrow it. This great and beneficial change originated, as usual, from the humblest source, and was made principally operative by the severity of persecution. It had also an original connexion, both in locality and intercourse, with the Arabian conquests.

A remnant of Manicheans, who believed the existence of an  
evil

<sup>7</sup> Claude, in his letter to Theodemir, says, "Appointed bishop by Louis, I came to Turin. I found all the churches full of the filth of abomination, and images; and because I alone began to destroy what all worshipped, all mouths opened against me." Mag. Bib. t. 4. pars 2. p. 149.—He said, "If Christians venerate the images of saints, they have not abandoned idols, but only changed their names. If you inscribe on the walls, or paint images of Peter and Paul, instead of Jupiter and Saturn," &c. &c. Ib.

<sup>8</sup> His letter to Theodemir is printed in the Mag. Bib. Pat. t. 4. pars 2.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> One of his ablest opponents was Dungal, an Irishman, who went to France to instruct Charlemagne and his people. See his treatise, one of the best defences of image-worship, Mag. Bib. Pat. vol. 4. pars 2. pp. 145—199.

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Paulicians in  
Armenia;  
653.

evil as well as a good principle, had survived in Armenia, little known and of small importance, till the Arabian fanatics had become the masters of Syria. It was in 639 that they had completed their conquest of this province; and about the year 653, an obscure Armenian, named Constantine, was living at the city of Mananalis, when a deacon, who had been a prisoner among the Saracens, in Syria, having obtained his release, was returning home through this city. He was kindly received by Constantine, and entertained some days at his house. To requite the hospitality of the generous stranger, he gave him two manuscripts, which he had brought out of Syria—the Gospels, and the Epistles of St. Paul<sup>11</sup>. From this present, we may infer, that the disposition of the traveller was religious, and that their conversation was upon corresponding subjects. The successes of the Arabian zealots, who had then added Persia and Ægypt to their dominions, were astonishing the world, and were, together with their new faith, pretensions, and systems, the subject, every where, of conversation. The guest of Constantine must, during his captivity, have heard much of the coarse invectives of the Saracens against the Christian superstitions, for it was the favourite topic of Arab eloquence and zeal, on their first irruptions; and that his conversation and present had effects of this sort on the mind of Constantine is evident, for he became afterwards determined to touch no books but the Gospels and St. Paul, and to become himself a teacher of opinions very opposite to those of the Grecian hierarchy. He threw away his Manichean library; he exploded and rejected many of the absurd notions of his countrymen, and led them to abandon their former teachers whom they had most venerated, even Manes himself. But he also attacked the superstitions of the Greek church.

He

<sup>11</sup> We derive this account from Petrus Siculus, who went from the emperor Basil the Great, to the Paulicians in Armenia, in 870, to negotiate for an exchange of prisoners. See his *Historia*, in the *Bib. Mag. Pat.* vol. 16. pp. 814—825.



He quitted Mananalis for Cibossa, and lived there twenty-seven years, spreading his opinions around <sup>12</sup>.

The Grecian emperor hearing of his progress, sent Simeon, one of his courtiers, to have him stoned, and his disciples dispersed. The issue of this persecution was, that Simeon himself became a convert, and three years afterwards went to Cibossa, and became the successor to Constantine in diffusing his obnoxious opinions. Justinian, the emperor, better known for his jurisprudence than for his humanity, ordered all these heretics to be seized and burnt. This cruel order was executed. As many as were ascertained and could be collected, were massed together in an immense pile, and consumed, excepting Paulus, an *Arabian* <sup>13</sup>, and his two sons, whom he had carefully imbued with his opinions. One of these was sent to Constantinople, and questioned by the patriarch, ‘Why he denied the orthodox faith? why he did not *adore* the venerated cross? why he did not worship and adore the holy mother of God? why he did not partake the transubstantiated eucharist? why he abandoned the catholic and apostolic church?’ Escaping from the patriarch, he went to Epiparis, and, collecting all those who were of the same opinions with himself, fled to Mananalis, their metropolis, then in the power of the Saracens, and under their protection lived and flourished above thirty years <sup>14</sup>. His disciples not only increased there under the name of Paulicians, but spread into Phrygia and other parts <sup>15</sup>. The imperial government fiercely persecuted them in its own dominions <sup>16</sup>; and the empress Theodora is declared by her friends to have extirpated 100,000 of these people, “by the sword, the gibbet, or the flames” <sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> Petrus Siculus, pp. 820, 821.

<sup>13</sup> Præter Paulum quondam genere Arabem. Pet. Sic. p. 821.

<sup>14</sup> Pet. Sic. p. 822.

<sup>15</sup> Pet. Sic. 822.—It was urged to them

as a reproach, that many of them were sprung from Saracens, “ex Saracenis genus ducere.” Ib.

<sup>16</sup> Pet. Sic. 824.

<sup>17</sup> Gibb. Hist. vol. 5. c. 54. p. 527.

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Paulicians  
emigrate to  
Europe.

The great instrument of their multiplication was still the Gospels. It was by putting these into the hands of Sergius, afterwards one of the great propagators of their opinions, that an aged woman converted him<sup>18</sup>. The importance of his conversion we may estimate by reading, that for thirty-four years he occupied himself in spreading his new evangelical truths through every city and province he could reach<sup>19</sup>. His efforts were so successful, that he was thought to be the precursor of Anti-Christ, and to be producing the great apostasy foretold by St. Paul<sup>20</sup>. The murders encouraged by Theodora roused the surviving Paulicians to more stern resistance. Carbeas extended the region of their residence, built Tephric, near the mountains of Trebizond, and with the aid of the Saracens maintained a fierce war with the Grecian emperors, which his successor continued<sup>21</sup>. But their minute history need not be pursued. It is agreed by the best historians, that they were transplanted into Thrace<sup>22</sup>, that they penetrated Bulgaria<sup>23</sup>, that

<sup>18</sup> So says their fierce enemy, Petrus Siculus: "She, diaboli sectatrix, thus addressed the young man: 'I hear, sir, that you excel in literature and erudition, and are besides in every respect a good man; tell me then, why do you not read the sacred Gospels?' He answered, '*It is not lawful* for us profane persons to read them, but for priests only.' 'Not so,' she replied; 'there is no acceptance of persons with God; he wishes that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. But your priests, because they adulterate the word of God, do not read all to you,' &c. She then repeated to him various passages; he took the Gospels, examined them; '*Evangelii codicem evolvi*,' and became a Paulician." Pet. Sic. pp. 822, 823.

<sup>19</sup> His own words are, "From the East to the West, and from the North to the South, have I been proclaiming the Gospel, and labouring on my knees." Pet. Sic. 823.

<sup>20</sup> Petrus, with the usual acerbity and folly of all political and religious controversy, and from which the literary mind has not yet emancipated itself, not only mentions this absurd charge, but also calls him the *lupus sub ovina pelle*; the *diaboli maximus propugnator*; the *virtutum fraudulentus simulator*; the *inimicus crucis Christi*; the *os impietatis*; the *Christi osor*; *nequitiae architecta*, &c. Pet. Sic. 822, 823, 824. All which epithets have only one meaning,—that he taught with great effect.

<sup>21</sup> Pet. Sic. 825. Gibb. pp. 528, 529.

<sup>22</sup> Gibb. pp. 530—533.

<sup>23</sup> Pet. Sic. p. 814.—On these Paulicians the English reader may refer to Mosheim's *Eccl. Hist.* vol. 2. pp. 185 & 362. 431. Coote's ed.; and Jones's *History of the Waldenses*, pp. 277—280. I feel less difficulty than Mr. Jones does, in believing that the Paulicians had many absurd as well as valuable opinions, because such was the character of the age.



that they were introduced into Italy and France, and, under the various names of Albigenses, Waldenses, and others, which we are now to consider, spread through Europe<sup>24</sup>. It was in the eleventh century that, being again attacked in Thrace, they migrated into Lombardy, France, and Germany<sup>25</sup>. Their progress, conduct, and opinions here, have been fully described by their new papal opponents.

It was about the year 1150<sup>26</sup>, that several parts of the Continent had become pervaded by men, chiefly of the poorer and laborious classes of life<sup>27</sup>, who were forming themselves into little religious communities, distinct from the established Catholic church<sup>28</sup>, and who had the Scriptures with them in their vernacular languages<sup>29</sup>, and were intently and critically comparing<sup>30</sup> the tenets, system, and conduct of the papal clergy, with the precepts

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Albigenses;  
Waldenses;  
Cathari, &c.

<sup>24</sup> Mariana says, that a writer, 'clarus eruditione,' was of opinion, that the Albigenses entered France out of Spain. Mag. Bib. vol. 4. pars 2. p. 581. He states, that their doctrines pervaded part of Spain, and were taught at Leon. Ib. It is not unlikely that as the Paulicians had been nursed among the Saracens in Asia, some of their emigrations took shelter in Saracen Spain.

<sup>25</sup> See Mosheim, p. 580.

<sup>26</sup> Eckbert, who flourished in 1160, tells the bishop of Cologne, that the Cathari were frequently met in his diocese. He adds, that when he was canon at Bonn, he often disputed with them. See his Dedic. to his Sermones, 4 Mag. Bib. pars 2. p. 73.

<sup>27</sup> Reiner, who wrote in the thirteenth century, and had been one of their fraternity, remarks of them, "Vivunt de labore, ut opifices; doctores etiam ipsorum sunt sutores et textores." Contr. Wald. c. 7. p. 765.—He makes this their reproach, "We have philosophers, literati and princes; they only pauperes et opifici, mulieres et idiotæ." Ib. 747.

<sup>28</sup> Eckbert states, that they declared the true faith and worship of Christ was to be found "no where but in their conventicles, which they held in cellars and weaving manufactories, and in subterraneous places of this sort." p. 79.

<sup>29</sup> Reiner adduces, as one of the main causes of their progress, that they had translated the Old and New Testament into their vulgar tongue. "I have seen," adds he, "a rustic, who could repeat all Job word by word, and many who knew perfectly the New Testament." p. 747.—It was their reproach to the Catholic clergy, "It is rare to find a doctor among you, who knows by heart three chapters together of the New Testament; but we have scarcely any man or woman, who cannot repeat it in their own language." 766.

<sup>30</sup> Reiner describes these comparisons, p. 766.—They even attended the churches and heard the sermons, but it was to criticise the preacher afterwards. p. 765.

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precepts and instructions of the Evangelists and Apostles. They were universally diffused<sup>31</sup>. In France they were called Weavers, Poor of Lyons, Waldenses, and Albigenses; in Flanders, Piphles; and in Germany, Cathari<sup>32</sup>. They were at Bonn, and in the diocese of Cologne; they abounded near the Alps and Pyrenees; they were greatly diffused through Provence and in Tholouse; they existed in Spain; and had spread through Lombardy to Padua and Florence, and some had even entered Naples<sup>33</sup>. They were distinguished for their missionary spirit, and the caution with which they pursued it. They particularly studied to interest the great. One of their own fraternity, who had left them, thus describes their exertions: "They shew some merchandises, as rings or robes, to lords and ladies, to buy. If they sell these, and are asked, 'Have you any more to sell?' the answer is, 'I have far more precious jewels than those, which I will give you if you will keep me secure, and not betray me to the clergy.' Safety being promised, 'I have a gem shining from God, by which man may know God; I have another so radiant, that it kindles the love of God in the heart that possesses it.' The travelling merchant then read some interesting chapter out of his vernacular gospels, and if he found his auditors pleased, he turned to the denunciations, 'Wo unto you who devour widows houses,' &c. To the question, To whom must these menaces be applied? the answer was, 'To the monks and clergy'<sup>34</sup>."

The morals of these reformers are interestingly described: "They are steady, and modest in their manners; they have no ostentation in their dress; they neither use rich, nor sordid apparel;

<sup>31</sup> So says Eckbert, in 1160: "*Ita per omnes terras multiplicati sunt, ut grande periculum patiatur ecclesia Dei, a venemissimo quod undique adversus eam offendunt.*" p. 79.

<sup>32</sup> *Hos nostra Germania, Catharos; Flan-*

*dria, Piphles; Gallia, Texerant, ab usu texendi appellanti.* Eckb. 79.

<sup>33</sup> Reiner, p. 748.

<sup>34</sup> We derive this picture from Reiner, c. 8. p. 766; who says of himself, *Ego frater Rinherus olim heresiarcha.* p. 746.



apparel; they decline commerce, from their aversion to lies, oaths, and fraud, but live by the labour of their hands; they do not amass wealth, but are contented with necessities; they are chaste, especially those of Lyons, and temperate; they do not frequent taverns, nor dances, nor other vanities; they refrain from anger; they are always working, learning, or teaching<sup>35</sup>."

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Their internal government consisted of a bishop, an elder and a younger son, and deacons. On the death of a bishop, the elder son succeeded him, and the younger was advanced to be the elder. At a general assembly a new younger son was chosen. Their bishop took the lead in the imposition of hands, breaking the bread, and beginning to pray; or if he were absent, the elder or the younger presided. It was the duty of the two sons to visit all the flock in their jurisdiction. The deacons heard confessions of venial sins once a month, gave absolutions, and appointed the penances of three days fasting, or a hundred genuflexions<sup>36</sup>.

Their opinions betray that mixture of improving truth and continued absurdity, which was the unavoidable character of the mind at that period. They discredited purgatory<sup>37</sup>; they declared the pope to be the head of errors; and his church, from its worldly pomp, to be the scarlet woman in the Revelation; they called him and his bishops homicides, from the wars they excited<sup>38</sup>, and despised his excommunications. They taught, that bishops and abbots ought not to have royal privileges; and that it was an evil to found and endow monasteries and churches. They contemned councils. They reprobated exorcisms, public penances, especially of women; clerical celibacy, extreme unction, the monastic

<sup>35</sup> Reiner, c. 7. p. 765.

<sup>36</sup> Ib. c. 6. p. 758.

<sup>37</sup> "Secundus illi error, quod Deus nulli infert pœnam purgatoriam quam penitus esse negant." p. 757.

<sup>38</sup> Reiner, 750.—"Quod Papa sit caput omnium errorum—quod Romana ecclesia sit meretrix in Apocalypsi propter superfluum ornatum—Quod Papa et omnes episcopi sunt homicidæ propter bella. Ib.

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monastic tonsure, and Latin prayers. They declared all preaching to be fables, which could not be proved from the Bible. They derided ecclesiastical indulgencies, dispensations, and absolutions; the legends and relics of saints, and their canonizations, vigils, and worship. The numerous holidays of the Catholic system, their holy water, wax candles, consecrated oil, incense, splendid vestments, processions, pilgrimages, and other superstitions, they had in abhorrence. All images and pictures used in worship, they declared to be idolatry. They thought it better to feed the poor, than to adorn the churches; and they ventured to assert, that the holy Scriptures had the same efficacy when translated into the vernacular tongue, as they possessed in their Latin form<sup>39</sup>.

If they had confined their corrective opinions to these topics, the papal hierarchy could not have withstood their attacks; their appeal to the reason of mankind, would have been conclusive and irresistible, and the Protestant Reformation would have distinguished the twelfth or thirteenth century, as it afterwards immortalized the sixteenth. But these just and useful feelings they combined with other tenets and systems, which they had inherited from their Paulician ancestors, as absurd, and in parts more pernicious, than the follies they attacked<sup>40</sup>. And hence it became necessary, for the benefit of mankind, that they should themselves undergo a discipline which would separate the invaluable truths they had discovered and diffused, from the deleterious mistakes to which they were as much attached. The enmity of the hierarchy, whose downfall they projected, was permitted to be

<sup>39</sup> Reiner, 748—752.—They also declaimed against the worship of the virgin Mary and the saints, and asserted that God alone was to be adored. pp. 788—790. One of their chief authors was John of Lyons, "their great heresiarch," says Reiner, "from whose large book I have extracted these errors." p. 762.

<sup>40</sup> The fullest account of the Paulician errors is given by Petrus Siculus, p. 814—822. They had commenced from the Manichees, whom St. Cyril Hierosolym. describes, Opera, pp. 56—61.



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be the instrument of their improvement. Their prosperity was interrupted, their numbers diminished, and the survivors scattered by an abominable persecution. Their good opinions were sifted, during their sufferings, from their errors; and grew up in other soils to a fruitful and noble harvest, which has at last filled Europe with purer Christianity, a more intellectual worship, and the departure, every day accelerated, of base and debilitating superstitions<sup>41</sup>.

As their Paulician ancestors had incurred the hostilities of the Grecian hierarchy, so these Albigenses and Waldenses had to endure a persecution as ferocious from the Roman pontiff. In the cruel attack which nearly destroyed them in France, the English nation had acted a peculiar part. The crusade was commanded by our Simon de Montfort, and a large portion of the warlike missionaries were Englishmen<sup>42</sup>. But that this merciless massacre neither intimidated nor preserved England from an imitation of many of their heresies, will be seen in the following chapter. It is not improbable that some of the Albigenses visited our island<sup>43</sup>.

The dispersion of this people had an important operation on the mind of Europe<sup>44</sup>. It was in France that they were so pitilessly massacred. But we know that they were also at that time at Viterbo, Verona, and in Hungary<sup>45</sup>, as well as at Cologne, in

<sup>41</sup> The connexion between the Paulicians, Waldenses, and the Protestant reformers, has been discussed vituperatively by the jesuit Gretzer, *Prolegom. ap. Mag. Bib.* vol. 4. p. 733; more candidly by Mosheim; and noticed by Gibbon, c. 54. pp. 534—536.

<sup>42</sup> See 1st vol. of this Hist. p. 368.

<sup>43</sup> That emigrants at this period came from Avignon to England, we have an instance in the Falcasius, or Fawkes, who defended

the castle at Bedford against the regency of Henry III.

<sup>44</sup> Mr. Jones, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, has ably stated, though not from original sources, yet from authorities which, as far as I have examined, I have found to correspond with them, the more detailed history of these interesting people.

<sup>45</sup> See Innocent the Third's letters, forbidding the magistrates at Viterbo to favour heretics;

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in Flanders, and Bohemia. This murderous crusade against them in France occurred in the year 1210. But so far was this from extinguishing them, that we find it afterwards declared, that “in all the cities of Lombardy and Provence, and in other kingdoms and states, there are more schools of heretics than theologians, and many auditors who publicly dispute and convoke the people to solemn disputations. They preach in the forum, in houses, and in fields. None dare hinder them, from the power and multitude of their supporters<sup>46</sup>.” We have an instance of their emigrating from Montpellier to Metz; and that the bishop could not disturb them in this latter city, because its great men protected them<sup>47</sup>. The author who mentions this fact, adds, that the opinions so rapidly spread as to infect a thousand cities, and that, if the swords of the faithful had not repressed them, they would have corrupted all Europe. As he wrote while the persecution raged, he thought it would annihilate them. The universal diffusion of their spirit and purified doctrines afterwards, proves that his first estimate of their prevalence was formed with more judgment, than his prediction of their destruction.

It may be thought strange that opinions so valuable as those of the Waldenses, should have sprung from a little corner of Armenia, and in the mind of a Manichæan. But, if we reflect, we shall

heretics; ordering the bishop of Verona to examine if those accused of heresy were guilty; and requesting the king of Hungary to expel heretics—in Dupin's *Eccl. Hist.* 13th Cent.

<sup>46</sup> Reiner, ap. *Mag. Bib. Pat.* vol. 4. pars 2. p. 748.

<sup>47</sup> Cesarius Hersterbacensis, who lived at the time of the great persecution, and describes it, thus mentions the origin of the heresy at Metz. He says it arose *hoc modo*: “As the bishop was preaching in the church, seeing two men standing in the crowd, he

exclaimed, ‘I see among you two ministers of the devil, there they are,’ shewing them with his finger; ‘who were condemned for heresy in my presence, in Montpellier, and driven out of it.’ They left the church, and a great multitude gathered round them, to whom they preached.” He says, the bishop could not use violence against them, because they were protected by some great man of the city, whom he had offended, by having excommunicated one of their relations for usury. They sowed the new opinions there. *Ces. Herst. de Wald.* p. 229.



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shall perceive that it was more natural that they should begin in an outcast sect, on the borders of Mohamedanism, than in the Grecian established church. The individuals educated in that church, would from their infancy be so imbued with all its habits, feelings, and reasonings, that they would think in no other train. Nor had they the opportunity. We find from Petrus Siculus, that it was reckoned by the Greeks to be a profane thing, that any layman should read the Scriptures; and therefore Sergius was at first averse to consult them. But it was the comparison of the Scriptures with the system of the Grecian hierarchy, which could alone check the imposing effects of habit, instruction, and worldly greatness. Yet if the Grecian priesthood were the persons who only had the power of making this comparison, they were also the most interested not to mark the contrast; and from their most venerated prepossessions, and from the personal consequence which they derived from the prevailing system, they were the least disposed to indulge criticisms, which would depreciate their knowledge and diminish their influence. Nor was the mere reading of the Scriptures altogether sufficient. The mind springs up rapidly in its improvements, but it needs a beginning impulse. The censures of the Mussulman zealots were precisely adapted to furnish the incipient suggestions. The Arabian preachers and the Grecian hierarchy were at essential warfare with each other: and in Syria, as Islamism was there triumphant, its criticisms would be most known. Hence, it was perfectly natural that a Christian, who had resided in Syria as a captive among the Mohamedans, should be the agent to rouse the mind of Constantine to new reasoning on Christianity. As an individual of a discountenanced sect, he would be prone to hear with attention whatever depreciated the established hierarchy. But when, in addition to this conversation, his guest presented him with a thing so rare and little known, as

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a manuscript of the Gospels, a new field of knowledge was suddenly opened to his excited mind. No seed will grow, unless sown on proper ground. The mind of Constantine was of that description. It is declared by his enemy, that he devoted himself wholly to the perusal of the Scriptures, and that he threw off the absurdities taught by Manes, as well as awakened himself to perceive the errors of the established hierarchy. Unless all the circumstances had concurred, the result would not have taken place. His sectarian feeling; his obscure and humble dwelling, remote from the scenes of pomp and ambition; the visit from a traveller who had just quitted Mohamedan servitude; the sudden perusal at that juncture of the Scriptures; the possession of sufficient intellectual ability; and the depression of the power of the Greek hierarchy by the attacks of the Saracens; were all incidents necessary to coincide, before Constantine could himself attain to a perception of his new opinions, or could afterwards safely cherish and impart them. But, according to the reasoning expressed in the preceding Chapter, the illumination of his mind, and of those whom he instructed, could only be partial. Much darkness and error must have accompanied it. This is stated to have been the fact. The Paulicians as well as the Waldenses taught great absurdities, as well as inestimable truths; and therefore, though they were increased and spread around, they were also allowed to be persecuted, till they had roused or created wiser men in other countries, who, abandoning their mistakes, improved and circulated all their just reasoning and valuable discoveries.

But it is remarkable, that in Constantine, in Sergius, and in the Waldenses, the great instrument of human improvement was the possession and the circulation of the vernacular Scriptures. We shall find the same result in the history of Wickliffe. The discouragement of their perusal was necessary to the maintenance  
of



of perverted Christianity. Wherever they appeared, imposture trembled and declined; and moral religion and rational piety gained the ascendancy in their stead.

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Progress of  
disbelief,  
from the  
12th century.

It is clear, from the writers of those times, that as the twelfth century closed, although the external fabric of the church seemed to be firmly consolidated, opposing opinions of all sorts were afloat, which were operating to undermine it. The doubting mind will not always limit its mistrust on religion; it tends in many to be the Pyrrhonist or the Epicurean. In the days of Anselm, atheism was trying to establish itself by metaphysical subtleties. His friends, who saw the evil spreading, and knew his powers, urged him to review and answer the new objections<sup>48</sup>. In every age this task becomes necessary, because, as every age, attaining new knowledge, places its thoughts in new combinations, so the suggestions of irreligion from time to time appear associated with the most modern philosophy, and must be encountered with fresh reasoning, derived from the same source. It is therefore an important benefit to society whenever an intelligent individual arises, who can combine the great truths of Theism and of Christianity, with the augmented knowledge and larger reasoning with which his contemporaries are familiar. Anselm performed this task in the twelfth century<sup>49</sup>, as our Paley has done in the eighteenth. The School-

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<sup>48</sup> Anselm says, in his *Monologium*, "Some brethren have often studiously prayed me to state some of my meditations on the essence of the Deity, and my other reasonings connected therewith." In his *Prosologion*, he remarks, that his former work had occasioned his friends to urge him to another, and in his *Cur Deus homo*, he says, "I have been often anxiously asked by many, both by words and letters, that I should commit to writing the reasons of our faith,

which I am accustomed to give to those who inquire. They desire this, not that they may get to faith by reason, but that they may delight themselves by understanding and comprehending the things which they believe, and be ready to give a satisfactory answer to those who require a reason for what they believe." *Anselmi Opera*, p. 42.

<sup>49</sup> His *Monologium* begins with arguing, that "There is a certain best, greatest and supreme Being." And he pursues his theme, very

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men revived the discussion; but Thomas Aquinas, and others, like Duns Scotus from the British Islands, applied their Herculean powers to defeat it on this mazy ground.

Repressed in metaphysics, it took its stand on the commencing study of natural philosophy. Infidelity is one of the characters of the human mind, which, from the days of Paradise to our own, has never wholly left it; and, till our knowledge is greatly multiplied, will perhaps not be universally extinguished—because it is the champion of matter against mind; of body against spirit; of the senses against the reason; of passion against duty; of self-interest against self-government; of dissatisfaction against content; of the present against the future; of the little that is known, against all that is unknown; of our limited experience against boundless possibility. The truths of religion are objects of inference, sensibility, faith, and hope—but not of sight and touch. Those individuals who prefer to be sceptical, tend to believe only what they know by sense, and forget that as all the numerous facts of nature that are now known to the enlightened, were once a part of the unknown; and as all our present knowledge is but a small portion of actually existing nature; so nothing can be more inconsistent, even with our past experience, than to withhold from reason its power of just inference; to confine it to the material world or to visible objects, and to believe only as far as the sight has reached. But every age has had this tendency; and wherever it prevails, disbelief of religion, social unquietude and individual discomfort, will attend it. And yet, in degraded countries, where tyrannous and illiberal superstition reigns, even infidelity becomes an instrument of good. It has often burst those bonds,

very ably, according to the fashionable style and ideas of that day; but very much in the manner of the Arabian theosophists, whose

mode of reasoning was then most esteemed, and industriously imitated.



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bonds, which the fear of doing wrong made others submit to. It has operated like a pioneer, to clear the way for better regulated reason to follow. And as superstition ever tends to revive, and will always find many worldly interests and passions, as well as much credulous simplicity, to support it, it is not clear that unbelief has yet ceased to be serviceable. Indeed it cannot fail to continue while superstition lasts. In every age, superstition has been the chief parent of infidelity, and is peculiarly prolific of producing it in the more enlightened periods. The awakened mind spurns imposture, and is indignant at trick, tyranny, ignorance and imbecility, in its rulers or teachers. Infidelity and superstition are therefore natural combatants; coeval in birth, always contemporary, and destined to expire together.

We find from Lucas Tudensis<sup>50</sup>, that a philosophical book was in circulation in the thirteenth century, entitled, “*Perpendiculum Scientiarum*,” which, from his anxiety expressed about it, had obviously made much impression. He says that the heretics, who boast of the name of natural philosophers, ascribe to nature the daily course of things; and that God had conferred on nature the power of making all things; and that prayers are vain, because nothing can happen but what is determined by nature, therefore nature, not Divine Providence, made them. The object of these doctrines cannot be mistaken; nor of another, derived from more ancient times, that there was an evil power, who had made all visible things<sup>51</sup>. He remarks, that the Jews were then encouraged by the princes and judges to express their opposing opinions<sup>52</sup>.

In the curious little book of Alanus, against Heretics and Waldenses,

<sup>50</sup> He flourished in 1230.

<sup>51</sup> Lucas Tud. advers. Albig. l. 3. c. 1 & 2. printed in Mag. Bib. Pat. vol. 4. pars 2. pp. 691, 692.

<sup>52</sup> Luc. Tud. c. 3. p. 693.—He adds, “And

if any one, led by zeal, happens to exasperate one of these Jews, he is punished for it as if he had touched the eye of the judge of the city.” Ib.

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denses<sup>53</sup>, we find that the new opinions of his day were taking a range so unbounded, that if their circulation had not ceased, religion might have been expunged from the mind of Europe. He says, that formerly, various heresies appeared at different periods, and were successively condemned, but that in his time the new heretics, as he calls them, were combining and consolidating the old and new errors together, making one vast idol out of many idols; one monster from several. He recapitulates these new opinions, and adds his answers: they embrace all the circuit, and go to the very depths of scepticism<sup>54</sup>. We have the same fact in the philosophical opinions repeatedly enumerated and condemned, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, by the University of Paris<sup>55</sup>. We find a nobleman accused by a Troubadour, of being affected by some of these opinions<sup>56</sup>; and we know the sentiments expressed by Alphonso, the king of Spain, and by Frederic II. the emperor of Germany, though this latter chose to be also a persecutor<sup>57</sup>.

These

<sup>53</sup> It is a scarce tract. He addresses it to his lord the bishop of Montpelier.

<sup>54</sup> As, That there are two authors of nature; That the evil Being is the sovereign of the world, and the creator of our bodies, and of all animal and visible things; That there are no spiritual beings in heaven; That the soul perishes with the body; That there will be no resurrection; That the Jewish law was given by the malignant Being, &c. &c. Alanus adversus Heret. pp. 1—83. Reiner mentions others, who taught, That the world was eternal; That it was not created; That they themselves were the Trinity, &c.; That there would be no future judgment, &c. 753—755.

<sup>55</sup> See those condemned in 1227, in Mag. Bib. Pat. vol. 4. p. 917—in 1240 & 1270, p. 926—in 1318, p. 930—in 1340 to 1369, pp. 931—956.

<sup>56</sup> Hugues St. Cyr, who lived 1220, mentions of him, "He has neither faith in God, nor in the law; he neither believes in Paradise, nor in another life; he says, that nothing remains of a man after he is dead." Hist. Troub. vol. 2. p. 182.

<sup>57</sup> This Emperor's edicts against those he persecuted, are curious for the long catalogues of the names of the prescribed sects, which they enumerate. He calls them in one edict, "Gazaros, Patarenos, Leonistas, Speronistas, Arnaldistas, Circumcisos;" in another, "Patarenos, Speronistas, Leonistas, Arianistas, Circumcisos, Passaginos, Joseppinos, Carracenses, Albanenses, Franciscos, Bannaroles, Comistas, Waldenses, Burgaros, Commincellos, Barrinos, et Ortolevos, et cum illis de aqua nigra;" in another he names them, "Catharos, Patarenos, Pauperes de Lugduno, Passa-



These opinions were confounded with those of the Waldenses, who may have maintained some. Indeed, as Reiner in the thirteenth century reckons seventy sects of heretics<sup>58</sup>, whom he chuses to confound and rank with the Albigenses, and as all the clergy of that day massed them indiscriminately together, it is impossible now to distinguish the different classes. It is sufficient to remark, that from 1200 to 1300, a full century before Wickliffe appeared, men, with new feelings and views of reasoning, either as to the religion in general or to the prevailing hierarchy, were in the most civilized countries of Europe industriously circulating their opinions; sometimes in the church itself; frequently patronized by the great; persecuted wherever the clergy had power; moving from place to place, as danger pressed; and thus planting their opinions, from the fury of the hostilities against them, more actively and more extensively. Thus at the very time that the political mechanism of the papal government was the most complete, the mind of society was almost every where affected by counteracting principles, whose increasing operation could not fail to overthrow it. Religion was in this crisis, as the age of Wickliffe approached.—But before we state the nature and direction of his exertions, it will elucidate the fall of one of the most powerful and sagacious hierarchies that ever swayed mankind, if we review the more worldly incidents, which in our own Island contributed to accomplish the wish and crown the efforts of the good and wise, who laboured to separate faith from superstition, and piety from imposture.

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Passaginos," &c. Gretzer Prolog. Mag. Bib. vol. 4. pars 2. p. 722. By the Bugaros, he meant Bulgaros. Ib. 726. The king of Arragon, Alphonso, in his edict dated 1194, calls them "Waldenses sive Insabbatatos;

qui alio nomine se vocant Pauperes de Lugduno et omnes alias hereticos *quorum non est numerus.*" Mariana Pref. in Lcc. Jud. p. 582.

<sup>58</sup> Reiner contra Wald. p. 747.

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## C H A P. III.

PROGRESS OF ENGLAND TO THE REFORMATION OF PAPAL  
CHRISTIANITY BEGAN BY WICKLIFFE.

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OUR Norman princes had never submitted to the temporal sovereignty of the Roman See. The Conqueror had refused to do fealty to the lofty Gregory VII<sup>1</sup>. Both Rufus and his brother Henry had contested with the Pope the question of investitures; and Henry II. in his struggle with Becket<sup>2</sup>, had evinced the determined system of the English government to reduce the spiritual authorities to a due subordination to the civil powers of the state, instead of allowing them either the superiority or the independence which they projected to establish.

The fierce and sturdy character of Richard I. allowed no increase of an ecclesiastical power, for which he had little reverence. John, after teaching the nation to defy the papacy, unexpectedly threw his kingdom into its hands. But this event, instead of consummating the papal power over England, kindled a sense of national dishonour, which diminished even its former influence.

The

<sup>1</sup> Hist. Eng. vol. i. p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> Ib. p. 210.



The chain of superstition was, however, not yet broken. The clergy continued it with unanimous co-operation; and it was obvious, that unless the emancipation began with them, neither king nor people could effect it.

The English clergy have always comprised within their body some of the most conscientious, upright, and intelligent men in the nation. In moral principle and conduct, notwithstanding the imperfections and vices of many, they have never been inferior to those of any other country. They stood by the king in his controversy with Becket; they repeatedly resisted the pope, when they thought his measures objectionable<sup>3</sup>; and they beheld with avowed concern the contests for the papal chair, which so often divided the Christian world. By these disputes, the popes may be said to have themselves begun the stupendous revolution which destroyed their power; for these perplexing schisms, which no ingenuity could justify, gradually removed that mysterious feeling of veneration by which their assumed infallibility had been popularly supported. By anathematizing each other, and consigning to eternal perdition their respective supporters, they confounded the judgment and excited the criticism of many, who had never before allowed themselves to doubt of that infallibility, which they now saw hurling everlasting condemnation against itself. The wiser part of the clergy became as dissatisfied with these schisms as the deriding laity, and their own reverence for the papal chair insensibly abated. The reports of the immoralities of the pontifical court were not adapted to revive it<sup>4</sup>. The destruction of the

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Effect of  
the papal  
schisms.

Albigenses,

<sup>3</sup> See the letters from the "Clerus Angliæ" to the Pope, published among those of Becket; also those in 1245, in the *Annales Burton*. Gale Script. vol. 1. pp. 297. and 304—310; and see also Matthew Paris.

<sup>4</sup> See Petrarch's picture of the depravity

of the papal court at Avignon. That it continued in the next century at Rome, and had most injurious effects, we have the serious statement of Machiavel:—He says, "Nor can any thing portend the ruin of our church with more certainty, than that those who are

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Albigenses, which the Holy See had itself planned, and by its commissioners executed, excited feelings repugnant to all religious docility. The studies and exercises of the schoolmen had given activity and independence to the studious part of the ecclesiastical body; and before the reign of Henry III. had half passed on, the clerical mind of England visibly shewed that it was not at all disposed to slumber longer in tame servility to its Roman lord. The famous Robert Greathead, bishop of Lincoln, expressed and led the spirit of his age and country on this important subject<sup>5</sup>.

Resistance of  
the clergy to  
the Pope.

It was during this reign, that the clergy ventured to resist the heavy contributions<sup>6</sup> which the Pope imposed upon them. He persisted

nearest to the church of Rome, should have less religion than other people. By the corrupt example of the papal court, Italy has lost all its religion and all its devotion. We Italians have this obligation to the church and its ministers, that by their means we have become heathenish and irreligious." Diss. Tit. Liv. l. 1. c. 12.

<sup>5</sup> See his letter to the pope Innocent in 1253, in Matt. Paris, p. 870. In this address, with much personal and courtly compliment to the Pope, whom he calls "The most divine holiness of the apostolic seat," he ventures to take a wide distinction between such of the pontifical orders as were consonant with the lessons of Christ, and such as were not. To some of the last, he hints the applicability of such epithets as 'odibile, detestabile, and abominabile.' He talks a little about Lucifer and Anti-Christ, as if he had feelings in his mind which he dared not express; and ends with suggesting, that his opposition to the papal mandates was not 'contradictio sive rebellio,' but a very filial 'honoratio.'—The Pope, on receiving this, was not quite so civil as Greathead wished. He read it with a grim aspect, and exclaimed, 'Who is this mad, deaf, and absurd old man?' He avowed his wish to hurl such confusion

upon him, as to make him a fable, an astonishment, and a prodigy to the world. His cardinals wisely recommended milder measures. p. 872. Greathead went fearlessly on to declare the Pope to be both a heretic and antichrist, pp. 874, 875; and after his death was believed to have visited the Pope one night as an apparition, and to have threatened and terrified him by his dreadful invectives, when he was meditating to have the bishop's bones dug up and thrown out of the church. p. 883. The diffusion of such an idle tale implies the popularity of Greathead. Wickliffe, in the next century, made great use of bishop Greathead's hostilities against the Pope: In his Postils, he told the people, "Seith Roberd Grosteed that this [Pope's] bulles ben heresies; for thei ben false lores, contrarie to Holy Writ." MS. Cotton Lib. Claud. D 8. p. 279. These facts explain the reason why the applications to Rome to make Greathead a saint (Wilk. Conc. vol. 2. p. 287.) were but coldly received.

<sup>6</sup> Thus in 1244, when Innocent IV. sent his letters to extort money (pro pecunia extorquenda) for his war against the Emperor, the English clergy answered, That they were not to contribute against the Emperor as against



persisted in his demands<sup>7</sup>, and they met them with new statements of their spiritual grievances<sup>8</sup>. But the Pope hearing their complaints with stern insensibility or with angry censure, they felt it to be their interest to join as far as they dared in the measures of the crown, to emancipate the country from the pontifical prerogatives and exactions, or at least not to oppose. The papal power over England obtained its height in the reign of Henry III. and of course made the evils of its existence then most sensibly and almost generally felt. Besides the direct taxation which he imposed, and, by the threats and practice of excommunication, compelled, he also indirectly obtained other burthensome contributions, and asserted and exercised the right of appointing foreign ecclesiastics, who never visited England, to English benefices. Thus, besides the revenue which he drew from England, for his ancient privileges of the Peter's penny, and other long-accustomed payments; and besides the new supplies which he compelled by his arbitrary assessments; he drained the country also of a large portion

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against a heretic; that as the Roman church had its patrimony, so had they; that though the Pope was their prince, he was not so in lordship and property, but "cura et solitudine;" that the evangelical text is, 'whomsoever you shall bind on earth,' not, whomsoever you shall plunder; that their revenues were for certain uses, as for their ministry, and for the poor, and could not be taken for other purposes, without the authority of the universal church; that their revenues scarcely sufficed for all their own demands; that the king of England and the parliament were their patrons, who must first be consulted; and that they had already contributed to the holy see, on the faith that there should be no more exactions. Ann. Monast. Burton, pp. 296—298.

<sup>7</sup> The Pope required, in 1246, the moiety of all their produce, &c. for three years; and also of all livings, &c. Ib. p. 305.

<sup>8</sup> The English clergy, in their remonstrance, stated their grievances to be, That the Pope, instead of being contented with St. Peter's penny, extorted heavy contributions, and would extort more; that patrons were prevented from presenting fit persons, because the livings were given to Romans, who did not know the English language, and only expected their revenues; that the Pope exacted pensions, &c.; that an Italian incumbent was succeeded by an Italian; that assessments were exacted from them by Rome, without the king's consent; that by the numerous oaths imposed, their ancient customs and liberties were made to vanish; that in the English benefices, given to Italians, neither the right of the diocesan, nor the maintenance of the poor, nor preaching, nor the ornaments nor repairs of the church, were attended to. Ib. p. 309.

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Measures of  
the English  
sovereigns  
to lessen the  
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power.

portion of its wealth in the produce of the livings which he had conferred upon foreign ecclesiastics, and which were rigorously exacted. The ordinary bullion of the country could not suffice for these compulsory exportations; and the weight of the grievance was increased by the foreign usurers who accompanied his legates and bulls, and whose business consisted in supplying the taxed clergy with money to send abroad, in exchange for their moveables and agricultural produce. The exorbitant profits at which these money-brokers transacted their concerns, increased the revolting spirit of all ranks to the papal supremacy<sup>9</sup>.

The pecuniary claims of the Popes were in direct competition with the necessities of the crown. If Rome were suffered to continue to exact so large a share of ecclesiastical wealth, it was obviously impossible that the clergy could be liberal in their contributions to the state. It became the interest of the crown, for its own sake, to stop these enormous issues to a foreign power. Hence, as soon as the English sceptre was seated in a firm and judicious hand, which occurred under Edward I. it became the settled and persevering object of the executive policy to sever the chain that bound the English clergy to St. Peter's chair. The church of England beheld the first progress of this system with pleasure, because they panted for the independence and increased comforts which it assured them. They could not actively second it, from their dread of the papal excommunication; but it had their secret support and social countenance. They willingly contributed to increase the king's popularity, and assist his measures; they became his ministers, his ambassadors, his agents, and even his soldiers; and thus, unconsciously, the full consequences of their new

<sup>9</sup> The latter part of the History of Matthew Paris is a detailed commentary on the facts alluded to in the text: And see the petitions of the bishops and clergy to the Pope, in

1296, to mitigate his exactions, Wilk. Concil. vol. 2. p. 234. Matt. Paris, in 1256, says expressly, *Tepuit devotio multorum*, to the Pope. p. 926.



new system assisted to emancipate the English mind from the Egyptian bondage of the still-beloved superstition.

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The measures of Edward I. were judicious and decided. He began with protecting the clergy from the burthensome expences to which some of the barons had subjected them<sup>10</sup>, and permitted bishops to have the punishment of felon clergy, provided that they were made to undergo a proper sentence. Four years afterwards, he put that wise limit on the future increase of their property, which the statute of Mortmain imposes. All future donations to them of land, were made void by this law<sup>11</sup>. As this left them in the full enjoyment of their existing affluence, it excited small opposition. Shortly afterwards, they were ordered to pay the debts of the intestates, whose goods they administered<sup>12</sup>.

In the thirty-fifth year of his reign, he proceeded to the bold measure, of having it enacted, That no ecclesiastic of any kind should send any rent or taxation, or carry any church goods, *out* of the kingdom; and that no foreigner, who was abbot or prior of any English monastery or place, should impose any payment upon it<sup>13</sup>. This closed one great drain of wealth from the country.

The wars of Edward consumed the ordinary supplies of the government. He sought for an additional revenue from the affluence of the church. The barons and the commons willingly seconded demands by which they were benefited. But the clergy, who wished neither king nor pope to interfere with their revenues, resisted the taxation. While they petitioned the pope to mitigate his exactions, they made use of his pretensions to oppose those of the state. They wrote to the king, that they could not make any pecuniary

<sup>10</sup> Stat. Westm. 3 Edw. 1. c. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Stat. 13 Edw. 1. c. 19.

<sup>11</sup> Stat. Mortm. 7 Edw. 1. & 13 Edw. 1. c. 32.

<sup>13</sup> Stat. 35 Edw. 1. c. 1.—c. 4.

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pecuniary grant, without leave of the pontiff<sup>14</sup>, who on his part prohibited the king from levying taxes on the church<sup>15</sup>. The clergy now dreading their domestic more than their foreign sovereign, made an earnest representation to Rome, that Edward was seriously lessening the papal authority in England<sup>16</sup>. Winchelsey, the archbishop of Canterbury, resolutely withstanding the claims of the secular government, the king sternly maintained them; complained to the pope, that the ambitious prelate was disturbing the kingdom, and procured his suspension from his See<sup>17</sup>.

Edward II. restored Winchelsey<sup>18</sup>, but did not abrogate the measures of his father's state policy towards the church. The clergy petitioned parliament to be relieved from the unpalatable statute of Mortmain, from lay-taxations, and from other intrusions on their privileges<sup>19</sup>. But their efforts were not successful. Disputes perpetually renewed between the prelates of York and Canterbury, about the honour of having the cross carried before them, as part of their public pomp<sup>20</sup>; and excommunications by them of other bishops<sup>21</sup>, contributed to diminish the moral influence of the ecclesiastical dignities. Dissensions on the election of a new pontiff increased the growing disrespect to the sacred orders; and even Edward the Second's unpopular government had the courage to forbid the archbishop to impose taxations on his clergy, without the royal assent<sup>22</sup>; to send his letter to the cardinals, urging them to

<sup>14</sup> See their letter to the King, stating, that they could not grant him any money for the renewal of the charters, without leave of the Pope. Wilk. Conc. vol. 2. p. 226.

<sup>15</sup> See the Pope's prohibition, ib. p. 222.

<sup>16</sup> Wilk. Conc. vol. 2. pp. 231—233.

<sup>17</sup> See the King's letter to the Pope, ib. p. 284; and the suspension of the archbishop, p. 286.

<sup>18</sup> 2 Wilk. Conc. 291.

<sup>19</sup> Ib. 315—320. and 325.

<sup>20</sup> 2 Wilk. p. 255.—This was in 1300 and 1306.—The prelate of York forbid all in his diocese to obey Canterbury. p. 285. And see further on their disputes in 1314, pp. 448. 453. 471 and 525.

<sup>21</sup> 2 Wilk. 407. 413.

<sup>22</sup> Ib. 420.



to choose a new pope; and to summons the clergy<sup>23</sup>, notwithstanding the protestations against his right of convoking and directing them<sup>24</sup>.

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But it was in the reign of Edward III. that the greatest progress was made in reducing the papal power. The king's writ was issued, to inquire what benefices foreigners held in England<sup>25</sup>.

He issued a strenuous prohibition against appeals to the Roman court<sup>26</sup>; and the house of commons soon took the lead in assailing the papal privileges. In 1343, they represented to the king, that the pope had granted to two cardinals, benefices in England to the amount of 6,000 marcs, and in such a vague and crafty manner, that the levy would be 10,000, if the thing were permitted; that in time the country would be full of aliens, and, from their intrusion, that no son of a great lord or other Englishman would find benefices for their advancement. They complained, that, notwithstanding the regulations made under Edward I. the Pope, continuing to appropriate to himself the donation of benefices, had given dignities, prebends, and churches, to those who never lived in England; so that in time the patrons would lose their right of presentation, and too much property would be taken out of the kingdom. They declared, that the commons could not and would not endure it<sup>27</sup>; and the king welcoming the acceptable remonstrance, it was ordered, That no one should introduce into England, or deliver in it, any letters, bulls, protests, reservations, instruments or other documents, prejudicial to the king and people; and that none should receive such documents, nor accept benefices, nor induct upon them. Penalties were imposed on all the carriers of these papal mandates, and on those who should make

<sup>23</sup> 2 Wilk. Conc. 450.

<sup>24</sup> Ib. 442, 443.

<sup>25</sup> Ib. 574.

<sup>26</sup> Ib. 584.

<sup>27</sup> Plac. Parl. vol. 2. pp. 143, 144.

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make appeals, citations, or processes on their account, against the patrons of the benefices<sup>28</sup>.

Three years afterwards, the house of commons exerted itself to have alien monks expelled from England, and that their abbeys and priories might be seised into the king's hands, in order, from these, to make funds for encouragement and tuition of young scholars. They prayed, that the benefices of other aliens, and of cardinals, might be sequestered; that the money due to the Pope and foreigners might not be taken out of the country; that all alien friars, of every habit, might be made to quit the kingdom; that pensions granted to foreign ecclesiastics, which they specified, might be annulled; and that the clergy should be charged and taxed in all points as the rest of the community. They petitioned also for another important relief: They alleged, that no one was permitted by the ecclesiastical courts to prove a will, without giving to the church one-fourth or one-fifth of the property, as a ransom for the rest; and they required the abolition of this abuse<sup>29</sup>. In the next year, most of these demands were repeated<sup>30</sup>; and again, with additional requisitions, four years afterwards<sup>31</sup>.

The English clergy oppose the mendicant friars, and are attacked by them.

While the king and parliament were thus combining their power to diminish the papal, and with that the ecclesiastical, power and privileges in England, dissensions arose among the clergy themselves, which contributed to unfetter the national mind from that despotism, which they had so cunningly devised and so popularly established. The critical attacks of the reformers, on the wealth, luxury, and opinions of the Catholic church, in the South of France and in Italy, and the success of their itinerant preachers, had occasioned the Pope to accept the aid and to establish the orders of the new mendicant enthusiasts, who, under their leaders,

St. Francis

<sup>28</sup> Plac. Parl. p. 145.

<sup>29</sup> Ib. 162—171.

<sup>30</sup> Ib. p. 172.

<sup>31</sup> Ib. 232.



St. Francis and St. Dominic, professed their eager desire to become the spiritual militia of the papal See, against its opponents. The Pope observing the luxurious indolence and secular views of many of the established clergy, which made them every day more absorbed in their own pleasures and ambitions, and less attentive to the progress of his sacerdotal power—and anticipating the ill effects of such worldly conduct on the faith and docility of the European public—willingly accepted the offer of the new enthusiasts to found orders, making poverty one of their characteristics, and missionary activity in the world at large their constant employment. By renouncing property, they met the reformers on one of their most popular principles; by addressing the people every where in the vernacular language, they promised to acquire extensive influence; and by vows of obedience to their chiefs, they would soon be the most manageable servants and the most useful instruments of their papal sovereign. The plan succeeded to the full wishes of its authors. The Dominicans became zealous, popular, and efficacious preachers; the Franciscans pervaded every village; and both orders rapidly attracted the love, and veneration, and obedience of the populace of Europe.

But wealth, luxury, and power, soon became as precious in their estimation, as they were become necessary to the habits of the established clergy. It was the interest of the new friars to attack and depreciate the old monks and dignitaries, as it was of these possessors of the envied comforts to repress and exclude the mendicant adventurers. A fierce and implacable warfare soon arose between the new aspirants and the ancient clergy<sup>32</sup>, which inevitably made the public judgment the arbitrators of the differences, and as inevitably made that public judgment more enlightened

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<sup>32</sup> We see the proofs of this warfare in many incidental passages of monkish chronicles. Thus the Chron. Petreb. in 1224,

says, "Oh dolor! et plusquam dolor! O pestis truculenta! Fratres minores venerunt in Angliam." p. 102.

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enlightened by their mutual detections of each others faults, more sensible of the enormous abuses which were every where increasing, more convinced of the necessity of some general reformation, and gradually more able and more determined to produce it<sup>33</sup>. The rapacity of the new candidates for ecclesiastical power was undisguised<sup>34</sup>; and their depreciation of the rest of the clergy so effectual<sup>35</sup>, that by the time that the mendicant orders had succeeded in establishing their popular preponderance, the thinking part of society combined with its government to curtail the privileges, stop the progress, and lessen the wealth and influence of all. This important revolution began with the institution of the friars in the reign of Henry III. and became established in the public mind before the deposition of Richard II. The hostilities of these orders against each other, increased the alienation of society from both<sup>36</sup>.

In 1256, the people are declared to have laughed at the Dominicans, calling them hypocrites, successors of Anti-Christ, false

<sup>33</sup> Matthew Paris, in 1249, remarks, "The world now, elated with pride, despised the religion of the cloisters, and struggled to spoil the religious of their property." p. 768.

<sup>34</sup> Of the Predicatoros, Matthew Paris says, "That their ambition, disdaining the limits of their poverty, aspired to the highest places; to be venerated and feared by the prelates; to be confessors; to usurp the office of the ordinances, and to get them held in contempt, as insufficient in knowledge and ability to rule the people of God." "Hence," he adds, "they seemed to many discreet people to disturb enormously the order of the universal church." Hist. p. 693.—Of the Minors, he says, that they got privately into the territory of some noble monasteries, under pretext of once preaching and immediately departing; built a wooden altar; celebrated clandestine masses; received confessions; and sent persons to Rome, inveighing against the

conduct of the monks; obtained thence an order to have a mansion and some benefice for their possessions; and if any one did not satisfy them, placed them among the damned, &c. till they had shared in their treasury. p. 419. These are the statements on the part of the monasteries against their adversaries.

<sup>35</sup> Matt. Paris observes, that many, especially noblemen and their wives, despising their own priests and prelates, confessed to the Predicatoros, whence the dignity and condition of the ordinary clergy, "non mediocriter viluit." p. 694.

<sup>36</sup> Matt. Paris mentions, that in 1243 a warm controversy began between the two orders. The Predicatoros declared themselves to be prior, worthier, and more respectable in habit and preaching. The Minors claimed to lead a more strict and humble life, p. 611.



false preachers, flatterers of kings and princes, statesmen not ecclesiastics, despisers and supplanters of the ordained, artfully working into the royal chambers, prevaricating confessions, and contributing to make the immoral more audacious by their absolutions<sup>37</sup>. On the Franciscans we have opinions as unfavourable, among our monkish chroniclers. The Pope fostered them with peculiar care<sup>38</sup>. They taunted the ancient clergy on their ignorance<sup>39</sup>, they forced themselves into many of the ancient establishments<sup>40</sup>; and such was the rapidity of their progress, that they who professed the humblest poverty at their origin, walking barefoot, vilely clothed, and girded with ropes, had, in less than four-and-twenty years, obtained edifices as splendid as royal palaces, and revelled in wealth, which they are accused of practising on the fears of their dying penitents, unjustly to increase. One employment was given them, that could not fail to increase the rancour between them and the former ecclesiastical body. As some of the English clergy were known to have died extremely rich, the Pope ordered, that if any ecclesiastic should die intestate, his property should belong to the Roman See; and the Predicadores and Minores were appointed to investigate this subject, and to be diligent in the inquiry<sup>41</sup>.

The known luxury and believed immoralities of the wealthy monasteries, made a great impression on the public mind. Even some of the clergy became ashamed of it, and contributed to expose

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luxuries and  
vices of the  
clergy.

<sup>37</sup> Matt. Paris, 939.

<sup>38</sup> See his recommendation of the Predicadores, Matt. Paris, 694; and on his favourites, the Franciscans, *ib.* p. 342.

<sup>39</sup> "They asked devout persons, Are you confessed? Yes.—By whom? By my priest.—Who is that idiota? He never heard lectures on theology; he never laboured on the decrees; he never learnt to canvass a single

question; they are blind, and leaders of the blind: Come to us." Matt. Paris, 694.

<sup>40</sup> Thus in 1258 the Minors forced themselves into Bury monastery, though the abbot resisted them. Matt. Paris, p. 968.—In 1259, the Predicadores thrust themselves into Dunstaple. *Ib.* p. 986.—They entered also, without leave, the church of St. Alban. *Ib.* p. 695.

<sup>41</sup> Matt. Paris, 707.

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expose it, both in England<sup>42</sup> and elsewhere<sup>43</sup>. The pomp, vena-  
lity, and luxury of the English clergy, at the critical period of  
the thirteenth and fourteenth century, were not inferior to those  
of the monasteries, and are strongly implied in the satires of our  
ancient poets<sup>44</sup>. The effect of the clerical magnificence and volup-  
tuousness was not only to revolt the moral sense of the nation,  
but to inflame the envy and excite the resentment of the great.  
Both the king and the baron felt themselves lessened by the  
pomp, and thwarted by the power, of the prelate and the abbot;  
and the knights looked with the eye of military rapacity on the  
rich moveables and fertile possessions of the church, which in  
every part invited their plunder, and which were unworthily held  
by

<sup>42</sup> It is the subject of a work of Giraldus Cambrensis, that has never been printed, 'Distinctionum libri,' and of which a MS. partly burned, is in the Cotton Library, Tiberius, B 13. It is an historical and critical account of the "incunabula moresque" of some of the monastic establishments, in which he takes some pains to state how the monastic order had been hurt by the "factis enormibus et inordinatis" of which some were accused. He narrates several revolting stories. We may cite a short one: A discreet knight visited his uncle, an opulent abbot, and having carefully observed the "modos et mores" of the monks, he took his uncle aside, and advised him to restrain their gluttony and drinking. "Dear nephew," exclaimed his uncle, "do not be anxious about these things. If I were to subtract or diminish any of their enjoyments, I should incur their implacable hatred and hostility, and soon have a deadly cup given to me by my monks, "letale poculum a monachis meis."—He describes the disorders of the monks at Canterbury, St. Alban's, and others in England, and generally in Wales. MS. Tib. B 13.—Giraldus was answered by Adamus

Dorensis, who defended the Cistercian monks. Tanner Bib. Mon. p. 7.

<sup>43</sup> St. Bernard's Apology to the abbot of St. Thierry, for having censured the monks, contains a strong picture of the disorders that prevailed among them. See a copious extract in Du Pin's Eccles. Hist. 12th Cent. p. 72. Engl. ed.

<sup>44</sup> See Piers Ploughman's Vision and Crede; Walter Mapes's various poems; and many parts of Gower's Confessio and Vox Clamantis; and also of Chaucer. A few lines of the latter may be quoted from his Plowman's Tale, on their gaudy dress:—

- - - High on horse willeth ride  
In glitterande gold of great array.  
Ipainted and portred all in pride,  
No common knight may go so gay.  
Change of clothyng every day,  
With golden girdles great and small.

He says they are called Christ's ministers—

But Antichrist they serven cleue;  
Attired all in tyrannie.

Witnesse of John's prophecie,  
That Antichrist is their Admiral.

Chaucer's Plowm. Tale.



by those, who they thought ought to have no worldly wealth<sup>45</sup>, or at least no worldly vice. That many had these feelings, and called for a reform of the church by a diminution of its property and luxury, without being at all changed in faith or opinion, we have an instance in our poet Gower. He declaims against Lollardy<sup>46</sup>; but he is a warm advocate for ecclesiastical reform, and a severe exposé of ecclesiastical vice<sup>47</sup>.

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The immoralities of the Catholic clergy were so little capable of concealment in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, that they compelled the notice of their ecclesiastical chiefs. The cardinal legate of the Holy See found it necessary, at a council in 1212, to command the clergy to abstain from improper conversations in their churches; not to have women in their houses; not to preach to get money, nor to exercise the functions of advocates for gain; not to leave the choir during divine service; not to compel the laity to leave them legacies; nor to suffer in their cloisters,

<sup>45</sup> Thus the Troubadour, Guillaume de Montagnagout, "Why do the clergy wish such fine clothes, and to live in opulence? Why will they have such splendid caparisons? Why lay hands on the property of others? when they know, that all which they spend above the most simple living and clothing, is a robbery from the poor." Palaye's Troubad. vol. 3. p. 100. And see Raimond de Castelnau's satire on the clergy, ib. p. 77. The wealth of some individual clergymen we may infer from the complaint of the precentor of Lincoln church, that he had irrecoverably lost 11,000 marcs of silver. Matt. Paris's Hist. p. 297.

<sup>46</sup> This *newe* secte of Lollardie,  
And also many an heresie,  
Among the clerkes in themselfe.  
It were better dike and delve,  
And stande upon the right feith,  
Than knowe all that the Bible seith.

Gower's Prol. p. 10.

So again—

Beware that thou be not oppressed  
With Antechristes Lollardie.

Gower's Conf. l. 5. p. 137.

<sup>47</sup> See his Prologue, pp. 9—11; and his strong and animated satire on the vices of the clergy, in his *Vox Clamantis*. He begins with the prelates, and goes through all the other orders of the ecclesiastical body. He is a kind of metrical Seneca. He studies that kind of antithesis in his Latin verse, which Young, at times, so happily pursued in his *Universal Passion*. He is decidedly for the mendicant friars, against the monks and clergy, whom he accuses of selfishness, avarice, sloth, and profligacy. MS. Cott. Lib. Tiber. A 4. On the other hand, the mendicants drew down on themselves all the satire and eloquence of Wickliffe. See also the *Roman de la Rose*, translated, and on this point paraphrased, by Chaucer.

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cloisters, assemblies for play or debauchery; nor to entertain women there, nor in the places where wine was sold. Nuns were ordered to lie single. The archbishops and bishops were enjoined not to hear mattins in bed; not to hunt, nor to play at dice or cards, nor to be at the Feasts of Fools; and the monks were forbid to wear white gloves or gaudy shoes<sup>48</sup>. In England, the moral prohibitions were repeated at various periods. After the example of bishop Greathead, inquiries were made in 1252, whether the clergy frequented nunneries without reasonable causes, or had female relations with them; or were often at taverns; or were usurers, or traders, or fighters; and whether the rectors and vicars were resident<sup>49</sup>? In a year or two afterwards, an inquisition was made all over England, whether rectors, vicars, or priests, were 'enormously' illiterate? whether they had wives; whether they carried arms; whether they were drunkards; merchants, usurers, fighters or wrestlers; and whether they had many cures without dispensations<sup>50</sup>? In 1279, and at various other periods, we find continual denunciations against their concubines<sup>51</sup>. The conduct of the nuns is frequently alluded to with censure<sup>52</sup>. Severe penalties were issued in 1279, against those beneficed clergy who carried arms<sup>53</sup>. On this point it reads strangely, to find that in 1309, certain ecclesiastics were excommunicated for going about in arms; for joining themselves to thieves, robbers, and other malefactors, and even directing their rapine<sup>54</sup>. In 1305, and again in 1307, they were ordered not to frequent taverns, public spectacles, or the cells of strumpets; not to visit nuns; nor play at dice or improper games;

<sup>48</sup> See the Constitutions made at the Council held at Paris in 1212, in Du Pin's Eccl. Hist. 13th Cent. pp. 92—94.

<sup>49</sup> Ann. Burton, ap. Gale's Script. Angl. vol. 1. p. 317.

<sup>50</sup> Ib. pp. 324—326.

<sup>51</sup> Wilkins' Concil. vol. 2. pp. 36. 142. 169. and 296.

<sup>52</sup> Du Pin, passim. Wilk. Conc. vol. 2. p. 58, &c.

<sup>53</sup> Wilk. Conc. vol. 2. pp. 37—39.

<sup>54</sup> Ib. vol. 2. p. 415.



games; nor to have concubines, nor to leave their property to *their children*; nor to use green and red silk clothes, or gilt trappings<sup>55</sup>. The tendency of the rich clergy to superb dresses was so great, that neither the orders of their hierarchy, nor the satires of the poets, could extinguish it<sup>56</sup>.

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The vices of the clergy were the natural and unavoidable consequence of the constitutional principles and system of their hierarchy; and will always recur, while that continues, in every country where it dominates and prospers. The release of the clergy from all secular jurisdiction had been found, even in Henry the Second's time, to produce personal depravity. The independence of the monks, of all other supremacy or control but that of a distant sovereign and venal court, ensured their impunity. The abbot was the only chief whom they had to dread; and we have seen that Giraldus intimates, that they knew how to prevent his becoming a moral censor. The great wealth and possessions which the clergy were allowed to receive and encouraged to acquire; and the political power to which the popedom, for its own interests, always urged them to aspire and aided them to obtain; were in them, as in a large part of mankind of every age, incompatible with personal virtue or religious sincerity. The secret poison that was nourished in the heart of every priest, by the power which he claimed, and believed that he possessed, of creating the very Deity whom he worshipped; his privilege of receiving confession, appointing penance, and giving absolution; his assumed command of the pains of purgatory, and of the flames of the infernal world; his excommunications, interdicts, and fiery stake; the subjection and servility of mind, which, from birth to

<sup>55</sup> Wilk. Conc. vol. 2. pp. 281—296. See the remarks on the *sons* of presbyters and rectors succeeding to their fathers in churches, p. 60.

<sup>56</sup> See this again noticed, Wilkins' Concil. vol. 2. pp. 703. 730.

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to death, it is the constant aim of the papal system, by every possible means, to produce in its adherents—These means of pride and despotism raised the sacerdotal mind to a superior and mysterious sanctity of person as well as in official character, which placed the priest far above his votary, and tempted him to neglect the rules to which he subjected his people. From the ninth century to the fifteenth, we see that human nature was unable to resist all these temptations to corrupt and selfish conduct; and none more unable than the Roman court itself. The evil was so general, that it became at last a necessary doctrine, and was strictly inculcated, that the vices of the priest did not derogate from the efficacy of his sacred character and functions—an opinion that increased the disorders which occasioned it, but which also accelerated their cure, by rousing the common sense of mankind to dislike the government of teachers, who practised themselves what they declared in others to be deadly sins—unpardonable, till paid for. This last act sealed the fate of the papal hierarchy. The sale of pardons and indulgencies was an absurdity, which even rustic credulity and female docility soon learnt to deride <sup>57</sup>.

While

<sup>57</sup> Chaucer describes a person, called a Pardoner, as travelling about with his pardons for sale. Our poet thus paints him:—

With him ther rode a gentill PARDONERE—  
That streit was comen from the court of Rome;  
Ful loude he sang, ‘Come hither, love, to me.’—  
His wallet lay beforre him in his lappe,  
Bret-ful of pardon come from Rome al hote—

But of his craft; fro Berwike unto Ware  
Ne was ther swiche another pardonere.  
For in his male he hadde a pilwebare,  
Which, as he saide, was our ladies veil.  
He saide he had a gobbet of the seyl  
Thatte Saint Peter had, whan that he went  
Upon the see, till Jesus Christ him hent.



While these political and moral causes were sapping the gorgeous fabric of the Roman church, mental agencies originating in its own bosom produced new assailants, that assisted in its overthrow.

It is a curious instance of the inefficacy of selfish, worldly policy, to make its own contrivances successful in perpetuating the servitude of mankind, that the great revolution of religious doctrines which ended in the Reformation, sprang up in England from the new orders of friars, which had been established to prevent it. In 1284, the Dominicans, or preaching friars, were denounced by the archbishop of Canterbury for propagating dangerous errors at Oxford<sup>58</sup>. In the next year, he renews his complaints against both them and the Minors or Franciscans. He accuses the "Captains" of the Dominicans as reviving heresies; censures their falsehood and malice; and accuses them of calumniating his reputation.

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He had a crois of laton ful of stones;  
And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.  
But with these reliques, whanne that he fond  
A poure persone dwelling up on lond,  
Upon a day he gat him more monie,  
Than that the parsone gat in monethes tweie.  
And thus, with fained flattering and japes,  
He made the parsone, and the peple, his apes.

But trewely to tellen atte last;  
He was in chirche a noble ecclesiast.  
Wel coude he rede a lesson or a storie;  
But, alderbest, he sang an offertorie.  
For wel he wiste, whan that song was songe,  
He muste preche, and wel afile his tonge  
To winne silver, as he right wel coude:  
Therefore he sang the merier and loude.—Prol. Canterb. Tales.

<sup>58</sup> The main error complained of was, that "In man there is only one form." The archbishop adds, "It wou'd follow from this, that no body of a saint exists either totally or partially in all the world, or in any city,

because, without the unity of form, general or special, no body could be, numeraliter, one." This notion had first been started by Thomas Aquinas. Wilk. Concil. vol. 2. p. 112.

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reputation. He tells the Franciscans, that they ought to reverence the priests of God ; and that they who despise the episcopal dignity, disturb the peace of the church. He exclaims against the arrogance of some, who “ more elate than capable, more bold than powerful, more garrulous than literary, presume to dogmatize with ignorance, and to delude the seducible young.” He compares them to the locusts in the Revelations. He dates their novel opinions as but twenty years old ; and complains, that the authority of the holy fathers was despised and thrown aside<sup>59</sup>. In the next year, he enters the field of rebuke and controversy again : he recapitulates the heresies, which he reprobates, and which were aimed at Transubstantiation ; he excommunicates all who maintain them ; and remarks, with asperity, that they who maintain them, give no credence to the authority of the Pope, or of St. Gregory, or St. Austin, or any orthodox master, but *only* to the authority of the Bible and necessary reason<sup>60</sup>. Twelve months afterwards, he requests the bishop of Lincoln to visit Oxford, to inquire into certain articles of science falsely so called, which were pursued in the studies at Oxford ; as if the first beams of religious improvement began to dawn from that university<sup>61</sup>. Soon afterwards, with the inconsistency of a man who, struggling to prop a decaying system, is obliged to use in one part the supports that he rejects in another, he gives the Franciscans, whom he had before denounced, the benefit of his protection. He declaims against “ the pestiferous dogmas,” that the Minor friars cannot hear confessions,

<sup>59</sup> Wilk. Concil. vol. 2. pp. 121, 122.

<sup>60</sup> As, That our Saviour's dead body has no substantial form, nor the same which he had when alive : That in death a new substantial form was introduced, and a new species or nature, though not joined by a new assumption or union with the word : That into this new form or nature the transubstantiation

of the bread was made, &c. &c.: That he who will teach these things does not “ shew faith to the authority of the Pope, or Gregory, or Austin, or such like, or to any master, but *only to the authority of the Bible and necessary reason.*” Wilk. Concil. vol. 2. pp. 123, 124.

<sup>61</sup> Ib. p. 128.



fessions, and absolve; and declares, that they may do both, though without the consent of the parish priests<sup>62</sup>: sacrificing thus the ancient clergy of the kingdom to the interests of the new mendicants, whose arrogance and ambition he had endeavoured to repress<sup>63</sup>.

At this period, the clergy appear to have possessed above half of the military fees, that is, of the landed property of the kingdom<sup>64</sup>.

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FORMATION  
BEGAN BY  
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<sup>62</sup> Wilk. Conc. vol. 2. p. 168.

<sup>63</sup> In the reigns of Henry III, Edward I, and Edward II, we find among our records many instances of the government's causing the mendicant friars to be arrested. Thus, 47 Hen. III, De fratribus Carmelitis vagabundis arrestand. Calend. Rotul. p. 33.—52 Hen. III, De fratribus vagabundis capiendis apud Westm. p. 42.—54 Hen. III, De fratribus vagabundis arrestand. p. 43.—So in the next year, p. 44.—In the reign of Edw. I, the same measure occurs, pp. 46 and 49.—So

under Edw. II, De fratribus *Minoribus* vagabundis arrestand. p. 77.—De fratribus *Predicatoribus* vagabundis arrestand. p. 78. ib. ib. So p. 79.—In the ninth year of this king's reign, we find a general order to arrest them all over the kingdom: "De religiosis vagabundis arrestandis per totum regnum." p. 81. These arrests, which were afterwards repeated, imply either great misconduct of the friars, or that it was the persevering policy of the government to repress them, as far as it dared exert its power for this purpose.

<sup>64</sup> It was stated that in England were—

46,822 Parish Churches.

52,285 Villæ.

17 Bishops.

53,215 feoda militum; of which, the *religious* had 28,000.

Hearne's Avesbury. App.

The half of these military fees would be 26,607; but the clergy had 28,000.

# HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

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## CHAP. IV.

### HISTORY OF THE WRITINGS AND OPINIONS OF JOHN WICKLIFFE.

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THE preceding sketches of the tenets, system, and manners of the English clergy, lead us to infer, that if they had continued unchanged, society would have declined into increasing deterioration. Fantastic systems of right and wrong being taught by the clergy, instead of the inflexible morality of their superseded Scriptures; and the active world, who despised the papal standard of merit, inventing others more consonant to their own habits, but as little connected with personal virtue as the superstitions of the political churchman; what useful result could occur? While the monk and the knight alike hated and reviled each other, the bulk of mankind were becoming indifferent to both; and began to lose all sense of moral obligation in that indulgence of their individual gratifications and humours, which both their temporal and spiritual chiefs were publicly practising.

As the papal system stood, no progress was attainable but in direct opposition to its most dreaded injunctions; and yet to overthrow it, before a more useful substitute was provided, would be only



only changing the shape of an evil, without any diminution of its mischief. It is true that any religious system, however wild or perverted, will suffice to make an oath binding on the conscience of its votary; which is all that some philosophers require: and the adoration of a crocodile will answer this purpose, while the animal keeps in fashion. But the obligation of an oath is only one of the operations of a religion on mankind, and it is not its most important agency; for if its other consequences be such as to generate a neglect or depreciation of the moral virtues, or to curtail individual improvement, or to multiply civil wrongs and private crimes, the legislator, in patronizing such a religious system, will be raising a harvest of mischief on the one hand, to be ineffectually counteracted by the diminishing efficacy of his oath on the other. We have the experience of Juvenal<sup>1</sup>, and of the history of his contemporaries, for our instruction—that if the established religion be such as to excite the contempt of the enlightened world, it does not even hinder perjury, but rather emboldens it. The deposing witness, emancipated in his own secret mind from all belief of the worship which he publicly maintains, or, as Mr. Gibbon expresses it, ‘concealing the sentiments of an atheist in the sacerdotal,’ we may add, the magisterial or civic robes, fearlessly lays his hand on the altar of Jupiter, or the once dreaded relic, and utters his falsehoods without dread, and, from his unawed selfishness, without shame. Nor is this the whole result: far greater evils follow, which disprove the theory, that all religious systems will be found equally efficacious for the peace and welfare of mankind.

The mind and conduct of the believer become always strongly assimilated to the mode and object of his worship. The adoration of a crocodile or a Moloch, vitiates the human character and actions

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<sup>1</sup> His 13th Satire is a masterpiece of reason and poetry, on this subject.

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actions with corresponding degradation. Moral virtues cannot coexist with Hinduism, but so far as the inculcated creed and rites of its Bramins are disbelieved or disregarded. In every part of the world, the votary will always reason like the young profligate in Terence<sup>2</sup>, though he may not so openly express his feelings; and, therefore, it is of the greatest importance to the intellect and integrity of the world, that its religion, as well in the adored objects as in its rites and system, should have nothing irrational, false, immoral, or injurious. But all these epithets had, in the fourteenth century, become applicable to papal Christianity. The interests of society therefore imperiously demanded, at that time, that the corruptions should be removed, and that the faith and worship of Christianity should be restored to its native truth and beauty, and thereby become more compatible with the knowledge and improving reason of the day. But how difficult was it for an individual to arise, competent to perform the Herculean task. The religious feelings which he would need, would be unfavourable to his mental emancipation; and the mental emancipation would tend to destroy his religious impressions. To combine the due mixture of each, so as to be able to see and separate the gold from the dross; and to fix the boundary-line between the absurdities proper to discard, and the essential truths that were to be retained; required an union of acuteness, knowledge, piety, judgment, firmness, and intrepidity, which occurred at that time only in John Wickliffe, a teacher at Oxford, and rector of Lutterworth in Leicestershire. His exertions were of a value that has been always highly rated, but which the late events of European history considerably enhance, by shewing how much the chances are against such a character arising. Many can demolish the superstition—but where is the skill and the desire to rebuild a nobler

<sup>2</sup> In the well-known passage, Shall Jupiter do this, and 'ego homuncio' not?



nobler fabric? When such men as Wickliffe, Huss, or Luther appear, they preserve society from darkness and depravity; and happy would it be for the peace of European society, if either France<sup>3</sup>, Spain, or Italy, could produce them now.

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The incidents that have been detailed, had concurred, with the enlarging fields of knowledge that began to be explored, to put the public mind into a new state of feeling and thinking on religion, and to prepare and dispose it for great revolutions. The reflective and conscientious having become dissatisfied with the existing state of things, although authority might curb the general communication of their sentiments, the exertion of its opposing power would only make the necessity of reformation more strongly felt; and convert a reasoning speculation into an active passion. It remained for the ruling powers of society, either to discern the improving spirit of the age, and gradually to conform the prevailing institutions to its progress; or, by maintaining the existing system with all its visible abuses and imperfections, to force the spirit of reformation into a perilous hostility. The ecclesiastical hierarchy resolved to permit no change, and even stoutly resisted the attempts for its moral reformation. It determined to preserve its whole system, and all its dependencies, and all its wealth, untouched, by the most vigorous exertions of its power, and of its secular allies. It denounced all opposing criticism as error and heresy; and prepared the excommunication, the dungeon, and the stake, as the reward of enmity, dissent, and innovation. The consequences were, the deposition of two sovereigns; civil wars for nearly

<sup>3</sup> Among one of the medals struck by Buonaparte on himself, was one with his own head on the one side, and that of John Wickliffe on the other. That he was meditating some change in the religion of France, and, through France, of the world, is probable, from many of the speeches of himself and

courtiers; but, happily for mankind, he abandoned his purpose. Great piety, virtue and wisdom, are wanted to make such useful reformers as Wickliffe and Luther; and to such a combination, what pretensions had Buonaparte? He would have been a modern Mohamed; not a modern Luther.

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nearly a century; and, at last, the entire subversion of that very system which its advocates, from such miscalculating selfishness, had so blindly and so obstinately resolved to keep unmodified and unshaken. Such will ever be the result of power warring against reason, and sternly maintaining abuses, instead of being vigilant to perceive, and of assisting gradually to meliorate and remove them.

In justice to the papacy it must be stated, that it was not at first blind to the approaching evil, and that it attempted the appropriate remedy. So early as 1215, Innocent III. exhorted the council which then met, to correct the ecclesiastical manners, because the disorders flowed principally from the clergy: from their conduct he declared the evils to proceed, which were infesting the church<sup>4</sup>. But how reform a body of men, who were enjoying half the property of Europe, and whose irregularities were practised by their very leaders, who called out for their amendment! Cardinals came over to England, and made strong laws against ecclesiastical depravity. How were these censors met? Some of the censured detected one of the cardinal legates in the commission of vice himself, and exposed and derided the corrupted teacher<sup>5</sup>. The bishop, the abbot, the monk, the friar, the cardinal, and the pope, were too much alike in their propensities and manners, to be intitled to reproach, or qualified to amend each other. Councils, therefore, made constitutions—popes exhorted—and reformers sneered. But those who had the means of luxury would not renounce it; and it became obvious, that nothing less than a total change of the system, or a subtraction of the property of the hierarchy, would be effective to amend it. Even Innocent III. who saw the evil produced by the moral disorders, was yet unable or unwilling to perceive that his mental system

was

<sup>4</sup> Du Pin's Eccl. Hist. 13th Cent. p. 95.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. Paris.



was falling below the intellect of the age, and must be improved or abolished. He thought, like many vulgar statesmen, that the sword could uphold it; and he used that sword with all the cruelty of a Nero, multiplying by it every danger he most dreaded, and ensuring to his own authority, thus abused, the hatred of the feeling heart and reasoning mind.

It was the distinction taken between the faith and manners, the doctrines, and the property, of the clergy, that mainly subverted their power; because on that point they were most assailable. They had made themselves the sole judges of their faith and doctrines. On this ground they were long impregnable, because their property, like a mighty bulwark, baffled all assault. But when the spirit arose, in those whose faith was unimpeachable, of rebuking their vices and diminishing their wealth, the day of the dissolution of their power began to dawn. Thousands favoured this innovation, who were as indignant against heresy as the pontiff himself. Thus two descriptions of reformers appeared: those, who believed whatever the church wished them to believe, but who demanded its moral reformation—and those, who accused both the faith and system of the clergy, of gross errors and mischiefs. These two classes of reformers were at first antagonists of each other: but as the hierarchy equally dreaded both, and disliked those most who attacked its property, it chose to confound and reprobate them together; and by this conduct compelled them at last to intermingle and unite.

The competition for the papacy in 1378, which occasioned double popes to be chosen, residing the one at Avignon and the other at Rome, and execrating and fighting each other with their paper manifestoes, and with the swords of their allies, for forty years, excited the surprised and sneering world to reflections, which encouraged the circulation of all the opinions that had been

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John Ball.

uttered by the persecuted and dispersed reformers, from the Alps and Pyrenees, and which now began to be diffused by their successors. One of the first who was distinguished by his activity in England, was a priest named John Ball. From the year 1366 to 1382<sup>6</sup>, he is noticed to have been indefatigable in promulgating his new opinions, sometimes in churches and church-yards, and sometimes in market-places<sup>7</sup>: his talents, perseverance, and success, at last occasioned his imprisonment. But other spirits were also at work; for, in 1368, the archbishop of Canterbury pointed out thirty errors which were in circulation, and magisterially condemned them<sup>8</sup>.

Birth of  
Wickliffe.

The intellect which was to change the state of the ecclesiastical world began now to emerge to notice, persecution, and popularity. Born at Richmond in Yorkshire, in 1324, John Wickliffe became a commoner of Queen's College, probationer of Merton, master of Baliol, and afterwards the head of Canterbury College, at Oxford. In 1361, he was presented by Baliol College with the living of Fillingham<sup>9</sup>; and he became afterwards the rector of Lutterworth. It was after the year 1372<sup>10</sup>, and before 1377, that he made his great attack on the papal system, in his *Trialogus*. This work is a Latin dialogue, between three persons, on the Deity, the spiritual world, the virtues, and the ecclesiastical doctrines and institutions. Its attractive merit was, that it combined the new opinions with the scholastic style of thinking and deductions. It was not the mere illiterate reformer, teaching novelties, whom the man of education disdained and derided; it was the respected academician, reasoning with the ideas of the reformer. In this work

His *Tria-*  
*logus*.

<sup>6</sup> The archbishop's letter against him is dated 1366. Wilk. Conc. vol. 3. p. 64.

<sup>7</sup> Ib. p. 152.

<sup>8</sup> Ib. p. 75.

<sup>9</sup> See Tanner's Bib. Monast. voc. Wiclevus.

<sup>10</sup> Wickliffe mentions this year in his *Trialogus*, but as 'recenter,' p. 292; so that we may infer the book to have been written soon afterwards.



work he declares the Roman pontiff to be the Anti-Christ<sup>11</sup>; he ridicules the adoration of the saints<sup>12</sup>, and asserts the mediatorial office of our Saviour<sup>13</sup>; he condemns the superseding of the Gospel by pretended traditions<sup>14</sup>, and the granting of indulgencies<sup>15</sup>. On the eucharist, he opposed the established creed of transubstantiation, and asserted, that though a sacramental effect took place on the consecration, yet that the bread and wine remained bread and wine, as our senses perceived them; they were only sacramentally, that is, mentally and spiritually, otherwise<sup>16</sup>. By this

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" "The Roman pontiff is the chief Anti-Christ, for he falsely pretends that he is the most immediate and resembling vicar of Christ in this world. He claims, from the imperial endowment, to have the chief domination, and to be the richest man in the world. But Christ had not where to lay his head. How then can such an Anti-Christ say that he is the vicar of our Lord, or like him? It is obvious that he is not, as he calls himself, the most humble man, but the elated vicar of the king of pride." Wickl. Trial. p. 130.

<sup>12</sup> "Let the faithful consider why particular churches so laboriously and so expensively ask the Roman court to canonize their brethren, and he will see that inordinate cupidity, and defect of faith, occasion it. Who, I ask, would make a buffoon his mediator, when he might have the aid of a most clement and ready king. The saints are not indeed buffoons; but they are less, in comparison with Christ, than a buffoon is to an earthly sovereign." Wickl. Trial. pp. 173, 174.

<sup>13</sup> "Christ is himself the mediator, the intercessor; the best, the most ready, and the most benign. He would therefore be a fool who should seek for another; because, if when two eligible things were proposed, we were, without a necessity, to prefer the least

eligible, it would be acting absurdly. Christ is always dwelling with the Father, and ever ready to intercede for us. We ought not then to seek for the mediation of saints, because he is kinder and more disposed to help us than any of them." Wickl. Trial. p. 173.

<sup>14</sup> "Want of faith, in scripture, is the cause of pride; and this pride chiefly consists in hypocrisy, the worst kind of pride, and often pursues our religious. They would not presume to superadd traditions upon the Gospel, which are usually contrary to reason, unless they were labouring hypocritically. Therefore the Brothers utter an invented untruth, when they say, that they have a private rule which exceeds in goodness the rules of Jesus Christ." Wickl. Trial. p. 110.

<sup>15</sup> After rebuking them for awarding the punishment of the next world, he adds, "It appears that the prelates, granting indulgencies, commonly blaspheme the wisdom of God; for they foolishly and covetously pretend that they know matters of which they are ignorant." p. 100.

<sup>16</sup> "Capere debemus a communi experientia sensus nostri, quod sacerdos ad altare accedens, ex pane et vino conficit vel consecrat unum sensibile remanens quod *vulgus* intelligit corpus et sanguinem Jesu Christi." Trial. p. 183. "Iste panis est corpus Christi, ergo

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this distinction, he removed from the most venerated part of religious worship the great provocative to infidelity; and preserved the English mind from that absolute rejection of Christianity, which the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation has, since the thirteenth century, been so fatally producing in every country where it predominates, even among many of its teachers.

Against the mendicant friars, whom the papacy was using as its new spiritual militia, as in the next century it adopted the Jesuits, and has now revived them to be its active and diffused partisans, the reasoning and declamations of Wickliffe were incessant. He takes every occasion to allude to them, and never without satire and reproach<sup>17</sup>. He repels the pernicious opinion, that though a prelate should be luxurious, an homicide, symoniacal, or otherwise vicious, yet that he must not be believed to be so by the subjected people<sup>18</sup>. When it is objected to him, that it would follow from his observations, that the pope and his cardinals frequently are defective in their faith, and deceive both themselves and their churches, he boldly adds, "It would be a lamentable conclusion, but it would be a true one<sup>19</sup>." On the priesthood, he ventures to hint, that though it becomes priests of pious lives to be the consecrators of the sacrament, yet, recollecting their frequent unworthiness, he adds, that the laity may also do it; and he quotes St. Cecilia as an instance<sup>20</sup>. On baptism, he suggests, that it is immaterial whether there be one immersion or three, or the water be poured on the head; the custom of the place where the party lives, should be the rule on this subject<sup>21</sup>: but that as to the

<sup>17</sup> Trial. passim. and especially pp. 261—297.

<sup>18</sup> Ib. p. 201.

<sup>19</sup> Ib. p. 198.

<sup>20</sup> Ib. p. 212.

<sup>21</sup> Ib. p. 213.

*ergo iste, panis est; et per consequens, manet panis; et sic simul est panis et corpus Christi.*" p. 190. He adds this conclusion, "Et patet fidelitas conclusionis predictæ,

*quod hoc sacramentum venerabile est in natura sua verus panis et sacramentaliter, corpus Christi.*" p. 192. He discusses this subject through several chapters.



the removal of sin, there can be no satisfaction but the death of Christ. He attacks fearlessly the avarice of the clergy, and contends earnestly for their moral fitness. He adds this simile—“When the king sends an army to combat in France, he chuses the ablest and the most skilful warriors; ought there to be less circumspection and solicitude about the qualities of those who have to fight against the devil, and to obtain for themselves and their people the kingdom of God<sup>22</sup>?”

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The practice of private auricular confession to a priest, he ascribes to Innocent III. and disapproves. He says truly, that the real efficacy of penitence consists in the altered disposition of the mind, and not in the technical confession, absolution, or penances enjoined<sup>23</sup>. He denies the Pope's power of binding or loosing, and his right to be deemed the vicar, either of Christ or St. Peter<sup>24</sup>. He rebukes the presumptuous doctrine, that without extreme unction no man can be saved<sup>25</sup>. He enlarges on bishop Greathead's satirical definition of a monk, ‘a dead body brought out of a sepulchre, clothed in funeral garments, and agitated by the devil,’ and applies it to friars<sup>26</sup>. He attacks the strange doctrine of supererogation, or that friars and saints may have merits more than enough for their own salvation, and which they may therefore sell to others; and that these merits composed a kind of accumulating bank or fund of merits, which the pope might distribute and barter to others—an extravagant invention of the human fancy, on which the system of indulgencies sold and purchased, rested<sup>27</sup>. He maintains the important truth, that no man ought to do evil for the sake of any finite or infinite good<sup>28</sup>. He calls upon the great men of the country to defend the people against the frauds, exactions, and luxury of the friars, whose number he computes

<sup>22</sup> Trial. p. 238.

<sup>23</sup> Ib. pp. 250—253.

<sup>24</sup> Ib. p. 253.

<sup>25</sup> Ib. p. 258.

<sup>26</sup> Ib. p. 260.

<sup>27</sup> Ib. pp. 274—280.

<sup>28</sup> Ib. p. 94.

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computes at 4000, and their useless expenditure, supported by begging, at 60,000 marcs every year<sup>29</sup>. He terminates his important treatise by considering the future condition of man; the last judgment; the nature of the soul, and its final destinies.

Wickliffe wrote this work with a strong impression of his personal danger. He states, that those whom he opposed were machinating his death<sup>30</sup>; and he strenuously enforces the duty of suffering martyrdom for the sake of truth; and earnestly contends, that it was as necessary in his time as in ancient days<sup>31</sup>. He adds emphatically, "Instead of visiting Pagans, to convert them by martyrdom, let us preach constantly the law of Christ, even to the princely prelates—martyrdom will then occur to us rapidly enough, if we persevere in faith and patience<sup>32</sup>."

Such a formidable attack could not be expected to be made unnoticed. In 1377, the Pope issued his commands to the archbishop of Canterbury and bishop of Lincoln, to cause Wickliffe to be arrested and examined, and to keep him in prison till further order<sup>33</sup>; and also letters to be issued, in case he could not be taken, citing him to appear at Rome, and answer for his offence<sup>34</sup>. The archbishop wrote to the chancellor of Oxford for full

<sup>29</sup> Trial. pp. 287—299.

<sup>30</sup> Ib. p. 189.

<sup>31</sup> "As all ought to be the soldiers of Christ, it is evident how many are condemned by their sloth, who let the fear of the loss of temporal benefits, or of worldly friendship, or of the welfare of the body, make them unfaithful in the cause of God, or averse to stand manfully by it, even to death, if necessary. It is a satanical excuse which modern hypocrites make, that it is not necessary now to suffer martyrdom as it was in the primitive church, because now all, or the greatest part of living persons, are believers, and there are no tyrants who put Christians to death. This excuse is suggested by the

devil; for if the faithful now would stand firm for the law of Christ, and, as his soldiers, endure bravely any sufferings, they might tell the pope, the cardinals, the bishops and other prelates, how, departing from the faith of the Gospel, they minister improperly to God, and what perilous injury they commit against his people." Wick. Trial. pp. 125, 126.

<sup>32</sup> Ib. p. 126.

<sup>33</sup> See pope's letter (Gregory II.) in Wilk. Conc. vol. 3. p. 116.—The pontiff hints that the opinions were the same, *mutatis terminis*, with those of Marsilii de Padua et Johannis de Ganduno. Ib.

<sup>34</sup> Ib. p. 117.



full information on this subject, and summoned Wickliffe to appear at St. Paul's church before him<sup>35</sup>. In 1381, the same prelate issued an angry denunciation against John Ball, ordering his clergy to confound him, and to proclaim him excommunicated, and forbidding any to assist him<sup>36</sup>. In the next year, new mandates issued, reprobating the heretical opinions, and attacking four other persons as well as Wickliffe<sup>37</sup>. The king's writ was obtained to Oxford, ordering it to inquire and banish those who were suspected of heresy<sup>38</sup>. The chancellor of Oxford suspended Wickliffe from all scholastic acts<sup>39</sup>. Twelve doctors sat at Oxford, to condemn his opinions; and their letter in 1382, states, that Wickliffe had within a few years sowed the province of Canterbury thick with heresies; that he had produced so many heirs of his sect, that they could not, without the severest efforts, be eradicated; and that it had lately very much increased<sup>40</sup>. Some of the accused were alarmed, and recanted<sup>41</sup>.

The great instrument by which Wickliffe operated, was the Scriptures. He translated them into English, and by that means enabled laymen, and even women who could read, to become better acquainted with them, than many learned and intelligent clergymen used to be<sup>42</sup>—an important admission from a contemporary, who was a stout enemy of the reformation. Wickliffe found a powerful protector in John of Gaunt the duke of Lancaster<sup>43</sup>. He was afterwards summoned to Oxford, where he appeared, and defended himself<sup>44</sup>. Preachers imbued with his opinions started

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<sup>35</sup> Wilk. Conc. vol. 3. pp. 123, 124.

<sup>36</sup> Ib. pp. 152, 153.—Knyghton says, that John Balle was the precursor of Wickliffe, as John the Baptist was of our Saviour. p. 2644.

<sup>37</sup> Nicolaus Hereford, Philip Rappynghon, Joh. Ashton, and Laur. Bedeman. Ib. p. 160. They seem to have been all clergymen.

<sup>38</sup> Ib. p. 166.

<sup>39</sup> Ib. p. 170.

<sup>40</sup> Ib. p. 171.

<sup>41</sup> See Ryppendon, Ashton, Stokes, and Crompe's Abjurations, ib. p. 172.

<sup>42</sup> "Unde per ipsum fit vulgare et magis apertum laicis et mulieribus legere scientibus quam solet esse clericis admodum literatis et bene intelligentibus." Knyghton, p. 2644.

<sup>43</sup> Knyght. p. 2647.

<sup>44</sup> Ib. p. 2649.

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up in many places<sup>45</sup>; and several knights, lords, and even dukes, espoused them<sup>46</sup>. The citizens of London became for the most part Lollards<sup>47</sup>, as the new reformers were called. The sermons of the mendicant friars, formerly so admired, were undervalued; and the preaching from the new Scriptures made an universal impression<sup>48</sup>.

Wickliffe, aware of the importance of vernacular instruction, was indefatigable upon that point. Besides his scholastic Trialogus, and his vernacular Bible, he also wrote his little familiar sermons or discourses, called his Postils on the Gospels<sup>49</sup>. In these, he takes every occasion to inculcate his new opinions. As specimens of his style in his native language, then in a rude state, a few passages may be cited. In one he repels the slander, that the reformers were enemies of religion, and political revolutionists; and laments their persecution<sup>50</sup>. In another, he attacks the love of worldly pomp and greatness of the popes and prelates<sup>51</sup>; he notices

<sup>45</sup> Knyghton, pp. 2655—2661.

<sup>46</sup> Erant etiam milites Dominus Thomas Latymer; Dominus Johannes Trussell; Dominus Ludowycus Clyfforde; Dominus Johannes Pecche; Dominus Ricardus Story; Dominus Reginaldus de Hylton; cum *ducibus* et comitibus. Knyght. p. 2661. The expression in the plural, of *ducibus*, goes very high, at a time when the dukes were few, and chiefly of the royal family.

<sup>47</sup> Wals.

<sup>48</sup> Knyght. 2665.

<sup>49</sup> These are in MS. in the Cotton Library, Claudius, D 8.

<sup>50</sup> The reader may be pleased to hear this great man in his own venerable but unformed English:—"And thus seyn thes folk to princes of the world that thes heretikes (the Lollards) ben false men agenys holy religioun; and thei casten to destroye lordschipes and reumes; and therfore to maunde

hem to be dede, or lette hem to speke. But lordes seyn agein that thei scholden knowe the lawe that Holy Cherche bath to punishe such heretikes, and therefore thei scholden go forth and punishe hem bi here lawe. Bi suche execution of suche false prelaus and freris is Goddes lawe qwenchid and Antecristes arered. But God wolde that thes lordes passeden Pilat in this poynt and knewen the treuthe of Goddes lawe in here moder tonge and have this two folk in suspecte for here corsede lyvyng and hidyng of his lawe fro knowinge of seculeres: for bi this cautel of the fend ben manye trewe men quenched." Wickl. Postils, MS.

<sup>51</sup> And in this poynt synnen specially the grettiste of the Cherche; for thei suwen nat Christ here, but Antecrist and the world. Loke the pope first and his cardinalis, whether thei taken no worldly worschipe but ben the leste and the moost meke of alle othre.

More



notices the cruelties used towards those who attempted to explore the truth<sup>52</sup>; he censures the custom of priests engaging in wars, especially in crusades<sup>53</sup>; he throws out a sarcasm on the wealth accumulated by the friars<sup>54</sup>, and on the prohibition to the laity to study the Scriptures, on the pretence that they were too sublime and too sacred<sup>55</sup>. But the great substance of the work is plain and useful lectures on the precepts and history of Christianity.

Many defenders of the existing hierarchy took up the pen against Wickliffe; and of these, William Wydfford, doctor of theology, was one of the most authorized opponents<sup>56</sup>. With all his ingenuity and learning, he had no other means of defence than to maintain the authority of tradition<sup>57</sup>; and he found that it would not be sufficient even to rest upon written traditions: the papal decrees had gone far beyond them: and this supporter of visible abuses, which reason could not justify, was obliged to assert, that,

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More foul pride and covetise is in no lord of the world. Go we to bischopis binethe thes and riche abbotis, fadris of coventis; and thes axen worldly worschipis; and bi thus may men knowe hem.—And gif thou go down to freris that ben beggeris, that scholden be mekest, more worschipe of ther brethren taketh no man in this world, as bi knelinge with kysinge of feet. Wickl. MS. ib.

<sup>52</sup> Sum men ben somouned to Rome, and there put in prisoun; and sum men ben cried as heretikes among the comune peple. And over thes, as men seyn, freris killen her owne brethren and procuren men of the worlde to kille men that seyn hem trewthe. MS. ib.

<sup>53</sup> They defenden that it is leweful and meedful prestes for to fighte in cause that thei feynen Goddes. And so thei may move thes prestes to fighte ageins the gentile men, and as thei have robbed hem of temporal goodes, so thei wolden preive hem of swerd. MS. ib.

<sup>54</sup> And thus it semeth that newe ordres overcomen not this world bi bileve that thei han in Crist for he lyvede not as thei lyven now. He purchacede nought to his Aposteles, neither houses ne worldly godes, but taughte hem both in comoun or privee to flee suche havynges of the world. MS. ib.

<sup>55</sup> And seyn it falleth not to hem to knowe Goddis lawe for thei seyn it is so heigh, so sotyl and and so holy that only scribes and pharisees scholden speke of this lawe. MS. ib.

<sup>56</sup> See his work in MS. in the Harleian Library, N<sup>os</sup> 31 & 42. He says in his dedication, that he wrote by the orders of the archbishop; and he dates his work from the castle of Framlyngham.

<sup>57</sup> Debemus credere, not only the Scriptures, sed etiam traditionibus apostolicis per successiones patrum a tempore apostolorum usque ad nos. Wydff. MS. Harl. No. 31.

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that, whether written or unwritten, they were, if received by the church, to be equally believed<sup>58</sup>—nay, that even many things, which did not follow from any thing in Scripture or tradition, must yet be matters of faith, and ought not to be controverted<sup>59</sup>—and that the interpretation on doubtful propositions of Scripture, given by Catholic doctors, ought to be believed to be their real meaning<sup>60</sup>.

Extensive discussions ensued, and many combatants appeared, on both sides of the question. But amid the stormy debates, Wickliffe, under the powerful support of his great friends, died in peace at his rectory, praised for his talents and virtues, not only by his friends, but also by his enemies<sup>61</sup>. Even under the reign of Henry iv. a letter appeared under the seal of the chancellor of Oxford and the assembly of its masters, addressed to the public, warmly applauding both his life and his abilities, and recommending his works<sup>62</sup>. He died in 1384, December 28. But his disciples were indefatigable. Three years afterwards, we find the bishop of Worcester complaining, that “the eternally-damned sons of Anti-Christ, *the disciples and followers of Mahomet*, conspiring with a diabolical instigation, confederating together under the

<sup>58</sup> Debemus credere etiam veritatibus ab universali ecclesia acceptis, sive scribantur, sive non. Wydff. MS. ib.

<sup>59</sup> Debemus credere multis veritatibus quæ ex contentis in sacra scriptura non sequuntur nec extraditionibus apostolicis, eo quod ex predictis, vel aliqua illarum, et quibusdam aliis quæ in facto notorio consistunt et rationaliter non possunt tergiversari. Ib. MS. ib.

<sup>60</sup> Debemus credere interpretationibus Catholicorum doctorum de prepositionibus ambiguis sacræ scripturæ. Ib. MS. ib.

<sup>61</sup> Knyghton's character of him is very high. “Doctor in theologia eminentissimus

in diebus illis. In philosophia nulli reputabatur secundus; in scolasticis disciplinis incomparabilis. Hic maxime nitebatur aliorum ingenia subtilitate scientiæ et profunditate ingenii sui transcendere, et ab opinionibus eorum variare.” Knyght. p. 2644.

<sup>62</sup> This mentions his “morum honestatem, sententiarum profunditatem et redolentis famæ suavitatem.” They say, “Absit” that our prelates should condemn for a heretic. “a man of such probity, who, on logic, philosophy, theology, morals and metaphysics, has written without a peer in this university.” Wilk. Conc. vol. 3. p. 302.



the name of Lollards, and actuated by insanity, were pouring out their poison from their honeyed mouth, under the veil of great sanctity.<sup>63</sup>—From which we may infer, that these reformers were men of virtuous lives and mild manners, as well as of intelligent minds. All the severity of persecution that the church could use, short of death, was employed, but never favoured by Richard II. more than the power of the clergy could compel. In 1394, the inferences made by the reformers were presented to parliament<sup>64</sup>. The clergy continued their inquisitions and attacks; but the new opinions spread both to high and low: even the earl of Salisbury, one of Richard's last favourites, zealously protected them<sup>65</sup>. A contemporary, not their friend, declares that the sect so multiplied at this period, that you could scarcely meet two persons in the street but

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<sup>65</sup> We will add to this part of our History the Oath which, in 1396, the hierarchy extorted from those who were suspected of Lollardism: it will shew the points which the establishment was desirous to maintain. "I William Dynot before yow worshipfull fader and lord archbishop of Yhork and your clergie, with my fre will and full avysed, swere to God and to all his seyntes upon this holy gospels, that fro this day forthward I shall worschip ymages with praying and offeryng unto them in the worschip of the saintes that they be made after: And also I shall never more despise pylgremage ne states of holy chyrche in no degre: And also I shall be buxum to the lawes of holy chyrche and to yhowe, as to myn archbishop and to myn other ordinaries and curates, and kepe ye lawes upon my power and meyntein them: And also I shall never more meyntein ne techen ne defend errours, conclusions ne teching of the Lollards, ne swych conclusions and techings that men clepith Lollards doctryn; ne I shall her bokes, ne swych

bokes, ne hem, or ony suspect or diffamed of Lollardery resceyve or company withall wittinglye, or defend in tho matters; and if I knowe ony swich I shall with all the haste that I may do, yhowe or els your ner officeres to wyten and of ther bokes: And also I shall excyte and stirre all tho to good doctrine that I have bindred with myn doctryne up my power: And also I shall stand to your declaration which is heresy or errour, and do thereafter, and also what penance ye woll for that I have don for mayntenynge of this fals doctryne enjoyne me, I shall fulfill it, and I submit me therto up my power: And also I shall make no other glose of this myn oth but as the words stonde: And if it be so that I com again or do agayn this oth, or ony party therof, I yelde me here cowpable as an heretike, and to be punished by the lawe as an heretike; and to forfeit all my godes to the kings will, withouten any other processe of lawe; and therto I require the notarie to make of all this the which is my will an instrument against me." Wilk. Conc. vol. 3. p. 225.

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but one was a Wickliffite<sup>66</sup>. If Richard II. had been a wiser sovereign, he might have conducted the improving spirit of his subjects to a happy issue; the ecclesiastical system would have been timelily reformed, as Wickliffe recommended; and the storms that agitated the country for another century might have been prevented or allayed. But, favouring the reformers, and at the same time offending his people, he gave the church the power of contributing largely to his dethronement. The new dynasty, which they mainly assisted to raise, joining with them to maintain all the abuses of the papal system, could not stand against the vindictive operation of the persecuted. The kingdom became convulsed in the struggle. But the House of York was enabled to depose the House of Lancaster—principally from the unpopularity to which the maintenance of the ecclesiastical corruptions and intolerance had subjected it.

But the important agencies of Wickliffe's mind were not confined to his own country; they not only enlightened England, but they electrified Bohemia. The marriage of Richard II. with a Bohemian princess, connected the two countries by a friendly intercourse. The queen's court was attended by several Bohemian knights and noblemen: she favoured the principles of our reformer<sup>67</sup>: and one of her countrymen, who had studied at Oxford, taking with him into Bohemia the writings of Wickliffe, as a precious treasure lent them to several persons, and among others to John Huss<sup>68</sup>, who was then residing at the newly established university at Prague. Huss was an able debater, and zealously embraced the opinions of Wickliffe<sup>69</sup>. Great discussions ensued; and

<sup>66</sup> Knyghton, p. 2666.

<sup>67</sup> Walsingh.

<sup>68</sup> We learn this fact from Æneas Sylvius, afterwards pope Pius II, who mentions it in his *Historia Bohemica*, c. 35. p. 66. He and

Dubravius, *Hist. Boh.* p. 613, seem delighted to remark, that Huss signifies a Goose in Bohemian.

<sup>69</sup> *Avide admodum Wiclevitarum doctrinam arripuit. Æneas Sylv.* p. 66.



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and we may infer the surprising number of the students at this place, by observing that 5000 of them left this town, and established another university at Leipsig<sup>70</sup>. Huss continued at Prague, promulgating the doctrines which he found in the books of Wickliffe, and asserting that they contained every truth<sup>71</sup>. He obtained the *Dialogus* of Wickliffe, already mentioned, and became more bold in maintaining the reforming opinions of his instructor<sup>72</sup>. The archbishop of Prague ordered all those who had Wickliffe's books, to be cited, that they might give them up. More than two hundred were discovered; and so highly cherished, that most of them were found to be ornamented with gold or silver clasps<sup>73</sup>. He had them all burnt. But his hostilities were inefficacious. In Jerome of Prague, a master of arts at the same university, and who had also studied our reformer's lessons, Huss found an able and an active colleague<sup>74</sup>. The moral character of Huss gave weight to his instructions<sup>75</sup>. Indeed as it was then almost certain that death would be the reward of such noble-minded men, none but the conscientious would attempt the perilous task. When we recollect that both these reformers were burnt alive, it is interesting to read how just and useful most of their opinions were,

as

<sup>70</sup> *Æneas Sylv. ib.* This was in 1408. *Dubrav. i.* says 24,000 students went away, p. 614; the other number is far more probable. It is added in his marginal annotations, "Thus Leipsig was a colony of Prague, as Prague was of Paris." The University of Prague was founded 1347.

<sup>71</sup> *Æn. Sylv. p. 66.*—Huss was born in 1373, of poor parents: In 1393, he was made bachelor, and 1396 master of arts at Prague; a priest, and preacher at a chapel there, in 1400; and doctor of the academy in 1409: In 1400 he was confessor to the queen of Bohemia. *L'Enfant Hist. Counc. Constance*, p. 25.

<sup>72</sup> *Dubrav. Hist. Boh. 615.*

<sup>73</sup> *Dubrav. p. 616.*

<sup>74</sup> *Dubrav. 617.* *Æneas* thus distinguishes the two men: Huss *ætate et autoritate major habitus; doctrina et facundia superior Hieronymus. c. 36. p. 72.*

<sup>75</sup> *Æneas* says of Huss, that he was *lingua potens et mundioris vitæ opinione clarus. p. 66.* The jesuit *Balbinus* thus describes Huss: "He was more subtle than eloquent; but the modesty and severity of his manners, his unpolished, austere and entirely blameless life; his pale thin face; his good nature and his affability to all, even to the meanest persons, were more persuasive than the greatest eloquence." *Balb. Epit. Rer. Boh. ap. L'Enfant, p. 24.*

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as described by their enemy, who identifies them with those of the Waldenses<sup>76</sup>.

To complete our idea of the importance of Wickliffe, it is only necessary to add, that as his writings made John Huss the reformer of Bohemia, so the writings of John Huss led Martin Luther to be the reformer of Germany<sup>77</sup>; so extensive and so incalculable are the consequences which sometimes follow from human actions.

<sup>76</sup> Æneas Sylv. 67. He thus enumerates what he calls their pestiferous dogmas:— That the Roman pontiff was like other bishops; no difference among priests: That not the dignity, but the merit of the life, gives the distinction: That there is no purgatory: That it is useless to pray for the dead: That images of God and the saints, should be destroyed: That holy water was ridiculous: That bad demons invented the religion of the mendicant friars: That priests should not be rich: That the preaching the word of God should be free: That neither confirmation, nor extreme unction, are sacraments: That auricular confession was absurd: That baptism should be with water, without any consecrated oil: That sacerdotal paraphernalia were of small importance: That it was vain to pray to the saints, because they cannot help us: That there should be no holy-days but Sundays: That fasting was not meritorious, &c. Æn. Sylv. pp. 67—69.

<sup>77</sup> Luther's own account of the impression he received from the works of Huss is this: "When I studied at Erfurd," says Luther, "I found in the library of the convent, a book entitled, The Sermons of John Huss: I had a great curiosity to know what doctrines that arch heretic had propagated. My astonishment at the reading of them was incredible:—I could not comprehend for what cause they burnt so great a man, who explained the Scriptures with so much gravity and dexterity. But as the very name of Huss was held in so great abomination, that I imagined the sky would fall and the sun be darkened if I made honourable mention of him, I shut the book with no little indignation. This, however, was my comfort, that he had written this perhaps before he fell into heresy; for I had not yet heard what had passed at the Council of Constance." Luther's Preface to the Works of Huss. L'Enfant, p. 27.



# HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

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## PART V.

### HISTORY OF ENGLISH POETRY, FROM THE TWELFTH CENTURY TO THE MIDDLE OF THE FIFTEENTH.

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#### CHAP. I.

##### THE ENGLISH POETS WHO PRECEDED GOWER.

THE history of English Poetry, from its first appearance in the twelfth century, to the middle of the fifteenth, begins with Layamon, and ends with Lydgate. This period embraces nearly four centuries: the principal writers who flourished in it, were—Layamon, Robert of Gloucester, Brunne, Hampole, Gower, Chaucer, John the Chaplain, Occleve, and the Monk of Bury. The literary cultivation, that preceded and accompanied them, assisted to produce their merit: their minds were portions of the stream of intellectual improvement, which, from the Norman Conquest, never ceased to flow through England: they were individual examples of the great national progress—expressing its nature, implying its sources, and hastening and facilitating its future march.

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Poetry always exhibits the most perfect state of the language of the day, and is the most efficacious instrument of extending

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and refining it; of enriching it with new graces, fixing it with increased accuracy, and diversifying and animating it with meanings, feelings, spirit, flexibility, and imagery, unknown to it before. Being every where composed in some form of a metrical position of words, which every phrase will not suit, it compels a selection of language from its makers; and their minds, thus accustomed, even in its humblest examples, to chuse expressions more fit than others, become necessarily more critical and discriminating as to the application and meaning of their language, and gradually in their taste. Hence the valuable poems of all nations are superior in diction and expression to their prose; superior in energy, force, precision, and pathos, as well as in those figures, turns, and graces, which poetry claims as its peculiar property and rightful inheritance. Our ancient vernacular poetry decidedly excelled its contemporary prose.

Poetry, whenever it soars above mere verbal versification, is the effusion of the sensibilities or the imagination of mankind, expressed in this selected phrase. Whether religion, love or war, indolence or intellect, was its first parent, it originated, on every supposition, from the excited feelings of mankind. Its finest compositions in every age are those which have been the produce of sensibility; and their genuine effect is to excite in the reader contemporaneous emotions. One esteemed species of genuine poetry is therefore the language of the heart, addressed to the heart; and, from the universal likeness of human nature, is every where intelligible and every where delightful.

All mankind feel, or are created to feel; but all do not equally cultivate their sensibilities. Nor can these emotions be operating with equal force at all times in the same individual. The mind cannot be perpetually excited without destruction. Its agitations must be far less frequent than its repose, or the unknown connexion



nexion between the intellectual principle and the bodily organization will be destroyed. Human life is also, happily for its comfort, not always so disturbed as to kindle the passions or affect the sympathies, in all its incidents. Its usual course is monotony ; or individual apathy or quiet ; or activity without interest or impression. The mind loves tranquillity as well as emotion, and more generally subsides into it. In this state it seeks to please and be pleased, without perturbation ; to be lulled, not agitated ; to be soothed and amused, without labour or pain ; to contemplate or create the beautiful, the agreeable, and the gay, instead of being elevated by the sublime, startled by the horrible, roused by the dangerous, or distressed by the pathetic. It possesses one charming faculty, which suits and gratifies this favourite indolence, the delightful fancy—that fairy maker of ideal beings and ideal scenery—which can select all that is good and pleasing in this world, and combine the interesting fragments into prospects, characters, incidents, and converse, far more beautiful and impressive than daily humanity presents to us. Magical artist! whom no labour can weary ; no failure discourage—ever giving her pencil to hope, to paint even the brief future of this world, radiant with splendors which nature never imparts ; and flattering with every coveted felicity which experience cannot realize <sup>1</sup>.

From this part of the intellect, poetry obtained new subjects, new sentiments, and a boundless region for its activity and creations. Perhaps in this quality, its leading excellencies, its wonderful nature, principally appear. If it merely repeated what the mind has actually heard and seen, it would be but like the painter, who, viewing the dying malefactor, depicted faithfully his writhing limbs

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<sup>1</sup> Sir Philip Sidney says beautifully, " Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry, as divers poets have done ; neither with so pleasant rivers, fruitful trees, sweet-smelling flowers ; nor whatsoever els may make the too much loved earth, more lovely. Her world is brazen. The poets only deliver a golden." *Defence of Poesie*, p. 543.

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limbs and distorted countenance; or who, sitting placidly in more agreeable scenery, represents in colours the exact peach he handles, or the bunch of grapes and vine-leaves that he sees hanging before him. While poetry merely versified history or biography, as in the rhymed chronicler, or the lives of the saints, it was only metrical phrase. It was not till, abandoning the real world, it deviated into the fictitious; it was not till it invented characters and incidents; not till it sang of imaginary Arthurs, Rolandoes, and Charlemagnes; not till it connected natural feelings with supposed situations; not till it fancied as well as felt; that its unlimited genius and distinguishing nature appeared—and from that hour it has never lost its hold on the human affections, and never been without either admirers or offspring. Hence, poetry had little to do with Wace or Gaimar; with Robert of Gloucester, or Piers Langtoft, in their elaborate histories. But it began to exist in Wace's *Chevalier au Lion*, in *Beneoit's Trojan poem*, and in *Marie's lays*.

But in addition to the feeling and the fancy, the intellect possesses also its ordinary power of miscellaneous thought—and poetry, besides interesting mankind with its superior subjects and produce, became also connected with this, the most usual occupation of the mind. The poet, accustomed to clothe his emotions and imaginations with metrical language, could not, from the mere laws of habit and inclination, avoid giving his other associations the same form of expression—and the world, delighted with poetry of the higher species, has always welcomed its diction in every other combination. Hence the poetical style has been, in every age, associated with the reason as well as with the sensibility and the fancy. Indeed we may expect to find it oftener united with the common level and subjects of thought, because the ordinary combinations of the mind most frequently recur, and require less genius to express.

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Thus in every nation which has successfully pursued this delightful art, there is the poetry of sensibility, the poetry of fancy, and the poetry of the cultivated mind, in all its other exertations. In the first ages of literature, we rarely meet with either alone. Sometimes, as in Wace's *Estories*, Brunne's *Chronicle*, and Piers Plouhman's *Visions*, we have the last kind, unmingled, unenlivened with either of the former: sometimes, as in Marie's *Lays*, the imaginative appears: and sometimes, as in Gower, Chaucer, and Lydgate, the same individual exhibits all. Their long poems present to us an artless miscellany of feeling, imagination, and reasoning mind—the latter indeed far more abundant than the others—and which was fully as precious, often perhaps more so, to its author. From this confused and indiscriminated mixture, all our old poets are in some parts highly interesting, and in others as dull. To themselves and to their own age the whole of what they wrote may have been pleasing and beneficial. Indeed, although Gower may, as Warton has jocosely said, have emptied all his common-place book into his *Confessio Amantis*, it was not less valuable or acceptable to his contemporaries. The studied thoughts of a cultivated individual are superior to those of the illiterate mind; and a rude age, in which few have learned to think, or think to any purpose, gratefully receives and eagerly applauds all that its mental benefactors pour forth. Such an age wants reasoning and knowledge and mind, of every shape and kind; and when these invaluable benefits are presented to it, worded in phrases which it can understand, and made attractive to its memory and natural love of melody by rhyme or metre, it welcomes every thing too warmly to discriminate, and profits from all too largely to criticise. Hence the first poetry of a nation will be promiscuous—will contain light and shade, beauties and deformities, in no order but that of succession, and put together with-

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out judgment or effect. It is not only to Layamon, Brunne, and Hampole, but even to Gower, Chaucer, and Lydgate, that this character is applicable. In these latter, though the princes of our ancient poetry, the interesting and the trifling incident; characters and scenery; logic, history, and fable; sentiment and prolixity; slovenly and felicitous expressions and thoughts; flashes of fancy, and tedious memory; all the spirit of genius, and dulness the most prosaic; occur together without any judicious arrangement, any foreseeing taste, any knowledge of effect, or even perceptible discrimination, in the author's mind, between the various merits of his dissimilar materials.

Good poetry, like all valuable literature, tends to improve both the future author and the public taste. Although at first the whole of the productions of the poet may please, yet in time a mental separation or decomposition begins. Whatever is mere reasoning, becomes familiar to his countrymen, and a part of the ordinary mind of every cultivated individual. These parts cease to interest, because no longer new or informing, unless they happen to be expressed with a select and happy diction, superior to what the public can generally imitate or actually possesses. Failing in this requisite, the bulk of Gower and Chaucer has undergone its fate. The world whom they have taught, has improved beyond the tuition. It is true that the most common thoughts, if expressed with peculiar beauty and felicity of phrase, will neither weary nor become obsolete, until the same thoughts become still more successfully invested with language by some succeeding writer. But this is a contingency that is perpetually happening; and therefore a large proportion of former poetry is always passing into oblivion, even of that which has been most admired by preceding taste. But those parts which delight the fancy and affect the heart, especially the latter, have a natural immortality; and for this



this sufficient reason, that whenever read or repeated, they always reproduce in the mind those effects which it is gratifying to feel; they are the addition of so much pleasure to life, whenever perused or recollected. Hence, while the poetry of mere reason is in its nature perishable and transient; while even that of fancy may have its day, and be forgotten, because future imaginations may combine pictures more fascinating—and Chaucer's Parliament of Fowles, and the Flower and the Leaf, are in this predicament—yet the poetry of the heart is the only poetry that no change of manners or lapse of time can destroy. Its source is nature; it acts on nature; and will survive as long as nature continues.

But when the poets, whom we are about to enumerate, had improved the public mind so far as to enable it to make the distinction between their imperfections and their merits, their poems became only partially interesting. Passages after passages dropped out of the memory of their countrymen. As Chaucer had found himself more interested with some parts of Brunne, Gower, and Dante, than with others, so succeeding writers remembered his beauties, and reproached and neglected his defects. Some improved in metre, some in taste, some in fable, some in feeling, some in judgment, and some in expression. Thus in every age new favourites arise, and old ones are forgotten. The recent genius, illuminated and enriched by the excellencies of his predecessors, imitates what is good, without intending imitation; and, starting from the elevation to which anterior intellects have raised human improvement, has the chance of soaring to higher beauties, and of leading the way to new regions of fancy, and nobler combinations of feeling and thought.

But besides its high merit as a composition of feeling and fancy, and of the most select language and cultivated mind, poetry stands forward to our admiration and love, as the great civilizer and instructress of mankind. In the ancient world, she performed this noble

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noble office from the lips of Orpheus, Musæus, Hesiod, Homer, Terpander, and Tyrtæus; of Phocylides, Euripides, Sophocles, and Menander; of Lucilius, Horace, Virgil, Juvenal, and others, whom the classical memory gratefully recollects. Aspiring always to soar beyond the imperfect present, her characters, phrase, sentiments, invention and imagery, have in every age been the most efficacious preceptors of morals and manners to mankind. Usually expressed with a terseness that arrests the attention, and fixes itself on the memory—clothed in language, pleasing from its melody, or compelling admiration by its happy imagery, or uttered by personages, or in incidents, that have already affected our hearts—the moral lessons of poetry have always been the first learnt, the easiest recollected, and the most willingly obeyed. The poet is the only teacher whom we sincerely like. He is the moral sovereign whom we most naturally obey, and whose reign the promiscuous world has rarely attempted to dispute.

And whatever may have been the subjects, the aims, or the caprices, of many of their successors, our oldest poets have a claim to be considered as the moral instructors of their countrymen. A proud distinction! If excellence be a subject delightful to contemplate, it must be still more interesting to produce it. Every writer, whose works improve his species, increases the happiness as well as the virtue of the world. Some of the more highly gifted intellects among our countrymen, have had this object distinctly in their contemplation: and with this class, in which Shakespear, Milton, Young, Thomson, Pope, and Cowper, are conspicuous, must be ranked those, whose ruder and more ancient efforts we proceed to notice<sup>2</sup>.

The

<sup>2</sup> We may recollect with pleasure our Sidney's noble sentiment: "As virtue is the most excellent resting place for all worldly learning to make his end of; so poetry, being

the most familiar to teach it, and most princely to move towards it, is, in the most excellent work, the most excellent workman." Defence of Poesie, 552.



## CHAP.

## I.

THE ENGLISH  
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GOWER.

The Anglo-Norman rhymers had accustomed the taste of the English clergy and nobility to that easy and simple style of narrative verse, which marks the rhymed chronicles and romances of Wace, Benoît, and Gaimar<sup>3</sup>. But when the separation of England from Normandy, and increasing national antipathy, had occasioned a disuse of Norman French in this country, a new vernacular literature was wanted, by those who valued any. The taste for reading had been created, and it was become one of the indispensable luxuries of the less occupied great. But from what source should this vernacular English literature at first be taken, but from the most popular and the most accessible? The Anglo-Norman had both these qualities. It was in the libraries of all who made books a part of their state or pleasures, and its reputation was universal. The first English writers accordingly resorted to it; and the translation of the Anglo-Norman chronicles, lives of saints, romances, and moral treatises, became for a while as fashionable as their original composition. The new generation springing up, to whom French was as strange as Latin, desired to be acquainted with the treasures which their forefathers had valued; and this taste occasioned a transfusion of the Anglo-Norman mind and style into the rude English intellect and language, which, by this means, soon became superior to their preceptors.

One of these Anglo-Saxon translators and transfusers was Layamon, a well known name<sup>4</sup>. But it has not yet been remarked, that no work shews more satisfactorily than his Chronicle, the benefits which English poetry and literature have derived from the

Layamon's  
metrical  
History.

Anglo-

<sup>3</sup> Hist. England, vol. i. p. 451—454.

<sup>4</sup> This historical poem exists in MS. in the Cotton Library, Calig. A 9. and Otho, C 13. He states himself to have been a priest, who resided at Ernleige, on the Severn. He says, that he composed his work from three books;

from Bede's History; from St. Alban's and Austin's; and from Wace, "the French clerk that well knew how to write, and gave it to the noble Eleanor, that was Henry's queen." MS. Calig. A 9.

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Anglo-Norman. In this composition we see a poem substantially Anglo-Saxon, but with none of that peculiar style of Anglo-Saxon mind and phrase which were its pervading characteristics: it is the simple style of the Anglo-Norman poetry transferred into the Anglo-Saxon: Hence, it presents to us the first state of our vernacular English poetry, divested of the inversions, transitions, obscurities, and metaphors of the Anglo-Saxon school, and approaching that form of easy and natural phrase which has been the nurse of our truest poetry and cultivated intellect. Arthur's account of his dream <sup>5</sup> may be cited and read as an illustration of these remarks; and

<sup>5</sup> ARTHUR lai alle longe niht  
And spac with thene geonge cniht,  
Swa naver nillde  
Ne him sugge  
Soth hu hit ferde.  
Tha hit wæs dai a margen,  
And dugethe gon sturien.  
Arthur tha up aras,  
And strehte his armes.  
He aras up and adun sat,  
Swilc he weore swithe seoc.  
Tha axede hine an vair cniht  
'Lauerd hu havest thu wæren to niht.'  
Arthur tha andswarede,  
A mode him was unethe.  
"To niht a mine slepe,  
Ther ich lai on bure,  
Me imatte a sweven;  
Thervore ich ful sari am.  
Me imette that men me hof  
Uppen are halle.  
Tha halle ich gon bistriden,  
Swulc ich wolde riden.  
Alle tha lond tha ich ah;  
Alle ich therover sah.  
And Walwain sat bivoren me.  
Mi sweord he bar an honde.  
Tha cam Moddred faren there  
Mid unimete volke.  
He bar an his honde  
Ane wiæx stronge.

He

ARTHUR lay all the long night,  
And speech with that young knight  
So never would he have:  
Nor say to him  
Truly how it went.  
Then it was day in the morning  
And the nobles began to stir.  
Arthur then rose up  
And stretched his arms.  
He arose up and sat down.  
Indeed he was very sick.  
Then asked him a true knight  
'Lord! how hast thou been to-night?'  
Arthur then answered  
And his mind was uneasy to him.  
"To-night in my sleep,  
Where I lay on my bed,  
I dreamt a dream.  
Whereof I am full sorry.  
I dreamt that men raised me  
Up on the hall.  
The hall I began to bestride  
As if I would ride.  
All the land then I had;  
I there saw over all.  
And Walwain sat before me.  
My sword he bare in his hand.  
Then came Modred to go there  
With innumerable people.  
He bore in his hand  
A strong battle-axe.

He



and as a specimen of the improvement of mind and style which English composition derived from its Anglo-Norman masters. To feel how great a revolution in our literature was thus begun, the reader may refer to the extracts which have been given in a former work, from the poetry of the Anglo-Saxons. The Dream of

Arthur

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He bigon to hewene,  
Hardliche swithe.  
And tha postes forheon alle  
Tha heolden up tha halle.  
Ther ich iseh Wenhever eke,  
Wimmonnen leofvest me.  
Al there mucche halle rof  
Mid hire hondeden heo to droh.  
Tha halle gon to halden,  
And ich hald to grunden ;  
That mi riht arm to brat.

Tha seide Modred, have that.  
Adun veol tha halle,  
And Walwain gon to nalle,  
And feol a there eorthe.  
His armes brekeen beithe.  
And ich igrap mi sweord leofe,  
Mid mire leoft beonde,  
And smat of Modred is hafd.  
That hit wend a thene veld.  
And tha Quene ich al to snathde  
Mid deore mine sweorede.  
And seo dethen ich heo adun sette  
In ane swarte putte,  
And all mi volc riche  
Sette to fleme.  
That niste ich under Criste  
Whir hor bicumen weoren.

Butin mi seolf ich gond astonden  
Uppen ane wolden.  
And ich ther wondren agon,  
Wide gethd than moren.  
Ther ich isah gripes  
And gresliche fugeles.  
Ther coman guldene Leo  
Lither over driven  
Deoren swithe hende.

Tha

He began to hew  
Very hard like.  
And all the posts cut down  
That held up the hall.  
There I saw Gwenhever  
The dearest of all women to me  
All the roof of that great hall  
With her hands she drew down  
Then I went to hold the hall  
And I held it to the ground  
That my right arm broke.

Then said Modred, 'Take that.'  
Down fell the hall ;  
And Walwan went headlong  
And fell to the earth,  
With both his arms broken.  
And I grasped my loved sword  
With my left hand  
And smote off Modreds head  
That it went into the field.  
And the Queen I cut to pieces  
With my dear sword  
And her corpse I set down  
In a black pit.  
And all my great people  
Set themselves to flight ;  
That I knew not under Christ,  
Where they were gone.

But I myself stood beyond  
Up on a wild,  
And there I began to wonder  
Gazing on the wide moor.  
I there saw devouring  
And grisly birds.  
Then came a golden Lion.  
Swiftly he drove over  
The deer very eagerly.

Then

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Robert of  
Gloucester's  
Chronicle.

Arthur has a title to be considered as poetry, because, however rudely expressed, it is entirely a fiction of the imagination, and displays more invention than our versifying chroniclers usually attempted, or have expressed at all in so small a space.

We must place Layamon after 1155<sup>6</sup>: and as Normandy was not severed from England till after 1200, I would not date the rise of English composition before that period, because the great, whose encouragement has been the chief producing cause of our literature,

Tha ure drihten make  
Tha Leo me orn foren to,  
And iveng me bithan midle;  
And forth hire gun geongen  
And to there sa' wende.  
And ich sah tha vthen,  
I there sa driven,  
And the Leo ithan ulode,  
Iwende mid me seolve,  
Tha wet i sah comen  
Tha uthen me hire binomen.  
Com then an fisc lithe,  
And ferede me to londe.  
That was al ich wet,  
And weri of sorgen,  
And seoc.

Tha gon ich iwakien  
Swithe ich gon to quakien.  
Tha gon ich to bruen  
Swule ich at fur burne  
And swa ich habbe al niht,  
Of mine swevene swithe ithot.  
Fer ich what to i wisse  
Agon is al mi blisse.  
For a to mine live,  
Sorgen ich met drige.  
Wale that ich matte here,  
Wenbaver mine quene.

Tha answarede the cniht  
'Lauerd, thou havest un riht,' &c.

MS. Calig. A 9.

Then our Lord made  
That the Lion ran towards me.  
And seized me by the middle,  
And forth began to stride,  
And turned to the Sea:  
And I saw the waves;  
To the Sea I was driven.  
And the Lion then howled.  
Thinking with myself,  
Then I saw the water come.  
The waves there took me.  
But a fish quickly came  
And carried me to land.  
Then was I all wet  
And weary from sorrow  
And sick.

I began then to wake  
And greatly to quake.  
I began then to glow  
As if I were burnt with fire:  
And so I have all night,  
On my dream greatly thought.  
For I knew from it this  
Gone is all my bliss.  
For the rest of my life  
Sorrow I must suffer.  
I grieve that I have not here  
Gwenhever my queen."

Then answered the knight  
'My Lord! thou art wrong,' &c.

<sup>6</sup> The date of Wace's work, from which Layamon professes to have taken his own. Mr. Ellis mentions 1180 as the earliest date

that can be assigned to Layamon. Spec. Eng. Poetry, vol. 1. p. 76. I would postpone it till after 1200.



literature, were not previously interested to reward any other than the Anglo-Norman, in which they had been studiously educated<sup>7</sup>. From the time of Layamon, English versification began to be cultivated in various branches. We have an evangelical history, the lives of saints, satirical ballads, moral ballads, songs, and a larger satire, that were composed when our vernacular poetry first began to acquire a definite shape<sup>8</sup>. The historical Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester, written about 1280, affords a still ampler specimen of our poetical diction at that early period. The eclipse in 1264, which he states that he saw, attests the chronology of his life<sup>9</sup>.

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Between Layamon and Robert of Gloucester may be placed a poem, consisting of a dialogue between an Owl and a Nightingale, disputing for superiority. It deserves notice, as one of those which marks the stage of the transformation of the Anglo-Saxon into English poetry<sup>10</sup>. It is not so ancient as Layamon, but it retains Saxon enough to belong to the period of transition from the Anglo-Saxon to English. It is also curious for being one of our oldest original

The dialogue  
of the Owl  
and Night-  
ingale.

<sup>7</sup> Apud Ducem Neustriæ educatur, eo quod apud nobilissimos Anglos, usus teneat filios suos *apud Gallos nutriri*, ob usum armorum et *linguæ nativæ barbariem tollendam*. Gerv. Tilb. otia imper.

<sup>8</sup> For these works the reader may consult Mr. Warton's History of English Poetry; Mr. Ellis' Specimens of our Ancient Poets; and Mr. Tyrwhit's Introduction to Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.

<sup>9</sup> He thus describes it:—

As in the North West a derk wedder ther aros  
Sodeinliche svart inou that mani man agros  
And overcaste it thoghte all that lond that me mighte unnethé ise.  
Grisloker wedder than it was, ne mighte an erthe be.  
An vewe dropes of reine ther velle grete inou.  
This tokninge vel in this lond, tho me this men slou,  
Vor thretti mile thanre. *This I sei Roberd*  
*That verst this boc made* and was wel sore aferd.—Hearne's Rob. Gl. p. 560.

<sup>10</sup> It is in MS. in the Cotton Library, Calig. A 9. and begins thus:  
Ich was in one sunie dale  
In one snwe dighele hale

And herde ich holde grete tale  
An hule and one nightingale  
That pleit was stif and stare and strong,  
Sum wile softe and lud among—

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Brunne's  
Poems.

original compositions, and for the successful efforts which it occasionally exhibits to form the true rhythm of English poetry. A few passages may be quoted of its happiest metre<sup>11</sup>, and one, in which the Owl's boast of her merit, alludes to some of the superstitious prognostications of the day<sup>12</sup>.

From 1300, English poetry attained a certain and definite existence. At this period Robert de Brunne, or Robert Mannyng, appears to us, well-known for his metrical Chronicle of England, translated in its first part from Wace, and in its second from the French of his contemporary Piers de Langtoft<sup>13</sup>; but not sufficiently known to us for a work that has been contemptuously passed over, though it marks an æra of the history of our poetry. The reader will not perhaps be much more delighted than Brunne's former critics, to learn that this poem, which we venture to recommend to his notice, is a translation of a *Manuel des Peches*, 'a handlyng of sinne'<sup>14</sup>: and indeed if it were no more than a code of monkish morals, it might deserve his disrespect. But it is  
monkish

<sup>11</sup> Thu singest a night and noght a dai;  
And al thi song is wail awai.

Vor harpe and pipe and fugeles songe  
Misliketh gif hit is to long.

Among the wode; among the netle  
Thu sittest and singest behinde the setle.

Thu nart fair, no thu nart strong;  
Ne thu nart thicke, ne thu nart long.

MS. Cal. A 9. ib.

<sup>12</sup> For ich am witiful I wis  
An wot al tha to kumen is.  
Ich wot of hunger; of hergonge:  
Ich wot gef men schule libbe longe.  
Ich wat gef wif luste hire make,  
Ich wat war schal beo nith and wrake.  
Ich wot hwo schal beon anhonge,  
Other elles fulne deth afonge:  
Gef men habbeth bataile iwunne,  
Ich wot hwather schal beon overkumme.

Ich wat gif cwalm scal cum on erfe,  
And gif deor schul ligge and storne.  
Ich wot gef treon schule blowe;  
Ich wat gef cornes schule growe.

MS. ib.

<sup>13</sup> This latter part was printed by Hearne, from which Mr. Ellis has given some extracts, pp. 115 and 118. The last is an instance of the genuine ballad metre.

<sup>14</sup> It is in MS. in the Harleian Library, No. 1701. Its beginning states it to have been commenced in 1303:—

Dane Felyp was mayster that tyme  
That y began thys Englyssh ryme.  
The yere of grace fyl than to be  
A thousynd thre hundred and thre.  
In that tyme turnede ywis  
On englyssh tunge out of frankys,  
Of a boke as y fonde ynnne,  
Men clepyng the boke, handlyng synne.



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monkish morality illustrated by tales ; and these tales are sometimes narrated with circumstances which make them approach far nearer to real poetry, than any thing which appears in this author's printed chronicle. They give us some of the most ancient specimens we have of English tales in verse, and may have contributed to form the mind, and to suggest the subject of the English poem of Gower, which resembles it for its mixture of ethics and stories, though different in subject and superior in merit. As they have never been quoted, and still remain in manuscript, and will probably never be printed, a few specimens may be acceptable from an author, who may be deemed the father of that narrative poetry which Chaucer, Spenser, Dryden, and some of our contemporaries, have so highly cultivated.

His Tale of the Lady, "a lordys wyfe," who loved "feyre tyfyng," though it may excite a smile for the judgment of the moralist, who punishes so severely the preference for a fine head-dress, yet is better told than any thing we have in verse, before Gower.

Tales from  
Brunne's  
Manuel  
des Peches.

WHAN she was dede sone afterward  
Here Squyer toke a syknes hard  
As he lay yn hys bed a nyght  
Hym thoght hys lady come to hym ryght,  
And seyde thus : " Rys, and go with me,  
" A merveylye shal y show to the."

Thy sycke man graunted here noght,  
For hyt ran weyl hym yn thoght,  
That she was dede, and leyd yn grave,  
That hym of hys bedde wulde have.  
But whether he wulde or noght, with wel and wo,  
She had hym up with here to go.

She ledde hym to a moche felde;  
So grete one never he behelde.  
Than stode styl thys lady :  
And he by here ful dreadfully.

As

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As they had stonde but a throwe <sup>1</sup>,  
Come furth Devylys that fast gan blowe.  
With hem they broght a brennyng <sup>2</sup> wheyl,  
That on here hede was set eche deyl.  
Thys whel that was set on her hede,  
Brende here alle, that noght was leved.

Efte <sup>3</sup> she ros, when she was brent,  
And had the same turment ;  
And brende ryght as she dyde before.  
To see that peyne hys herte was sore.  
Yyt she ros the same wey,  
For saule may never for peyne dey,  
And eft they set hyt on here crowne,  
And brende here al to ashen doune ;  
And ever more she levyd agen  
For peyne myght she never be sleyn.

Than asked he here, why that thys was  
That she suffred swyche peyne. “ Alass! alass !”  
She seyde, “ Y suffre thys mysaventure  
“ For on my hevede <sup>4</sup>, over-feyre tyfure <sup>5</sup>.  
“ For when y shuld agher go or ryde  
“ Y dyghte <sup>6</sup> my hevede ryght moche with pryde.  
“ For to be praysed over alle ladys,  
“ And of pryde to bere the prys,  
“ And among knyghtes yn halle  
“ Y wulde be helde feyrest of alle.”

Brunne's Manuel, Harl. MS. N<sup>o</sup> 1701.

<sup>1</sup> a time.

<sup>2</sup> burning.

<sup>3</sup> again.

<sup>4</sup> head.

<sup>5</sup> head-dress.

<sup>6</sup> made or dressed.

In another tale, this ancient bard attempts two humble strokes of satire on the fair sex :—

THYR was a man begunde <sup>1</sup> the see,  
A mynour, woned <sup>2</sup> yn a cite.  
Mynours, they make yn hyllys <sup>3</sup> holes,  
As yn the west cuntre men seke coles,  
Thys mynur soghte stones undyr the molde <sup>4</sup>  
That men make of sylver and golde.

<sup>1</sup> beyond.

<sup>2</sup> dwelt.

<sup>3</sup> hills.

<sup>4</sup> earth.



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He wroght on a day and holed in the hyl.  
A perylous chaunce to hym fyl.  
For a grete party of that yche<sup>5</sup> myne  
Fyl down yn the hole and closed hym ynne.

His felaus<sup>6</sup> alle that were hym hende<sup>7</sup>,  
That he were dede, weyl sothely wende<sup>8</sup>.  
They yede<sup>9</sup> and toke hem alle to rede<sup>10</sup>,  
And tolde hys wyfe that he was dede.

Thys woman pleynded her husbonde sore.  
*Wulde God that many swyche<sup>11</sup> wymen wore.*

She helpe his soule yn alle thyng,  
Yn almes dede, and yn offryng.

She offred for hym to the auter,  
Ful of wyne a pecher<sup>12</sup>;

And a feyr lofe withalle  
Every day as for a pryncypalle.

*Few swiche wymen now we fynde  
That to her<sup>13</sup> husbandes are so kynde.*

Bot thys wyfe at alle her myght  
Ded for hym both day and nyght.

Fyl hyt at the twelve moneth ende,  
Hys felaus to the monteyne gan wende<sup>14</sup>.

And came to the same stede<sup>15</sup> efte,  
Wher they last her work lefte.

Ryght ther they first began,  
And perced thurgh unto this man.

The man yn gode state they fonde<sup>16</sup>.  
Lyvyng withoute wem<sup>17</sup> or wonde—

Alle the men were yn grete were<sup>18</sup>  
How he had lyved alle that yere.

But he told hem everychone<sup>19</sup>  
How he had lyved ther alone.

“ I have lyved gracyous lyfe,  
“ Thurgh the curtesie of my wyfe.

“ For every day she hath me sent

“ Brede and wine to present.”....Brunne's Manuel, MS.

In

<sup>5</sup> same mine.<sup>6</sup> fellows.<sup>7</sup> behind.<sup>8</sup> thought.<sup>9</sup> went.<sup>10</sup> advise.<sup>11</sup> such.<sup>12</sup> pitcher.<sup>13</sup> their.<sup>14</sup> begun to go.<sup>15</sup> place again.<sup>16</sup> found.<sup>17</sup> hurt.<sup>18</sup> embarrassment.<sup>19</sup> every one.

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In a short tale, to deter women from cursing, he tries a dramatic quickness of dialogue :—

A woman on a day ful rathe<sup>1</sup>  
Yede<sup>2</sup> to the watyr here for to bathe ;  
And to her doughtyr her clothys to kepe,  
And badde her, she shuld not slepe.  
“ But as sone as y the kalle,  
“ Be redy with my clothys alle.”  
Whan she was bathed, she kalled her faste,  
And bade her brynge her clothys yn haste.  
Here doughtyr was not alle redy :  
Ne come nat at here fyrst cry.  
The modyr that sat yn her bath,  
Wax ful of ire and of wrath.  
And clepyd<sup>3</sup> eftsonys eftyr here,  
Kursyng with ryght grete yre.  
And seyde “ The devyl come on the,  
“ For thou art nat redy to me.”

‘ And y am redy,’ seyde the devyl,  
‘ To take that thou me betaght<sup>4</sup> with evyl.’

He flegh on here<sup>5</sup> where she stode,  
And made her wytte al wode<sup>6</sup>.....Brunne’s Manuel, MS.

<sup>1</sup> eagerly.

<sup>2</sup> went.

<sup>3</sup> called.

<sup>4</sup> given up to me.

<sup>5</sup> flew on her.

<sup>6</sup> mad.

His tale of a Dragon is a longer effort of his narrative powers, with a little more imagination :—

Ther ys an yle begunde the see,  
Ther men wer wunt wonying<sup>1</sup> to be.  
Thys yche<sup>2</sup> yle wax<sup>3</sup> al waste  
And the folc drogh<sup>4</sup> then yn haste.  
So withyne a lytyl whyle,  
Men helde hyt a forsakyn yle.  
Seththe wonede<sup>5</sup> there a Dragun,  
That dede many man confusyun.  
Men and women faste he slogh<sup>6</sup>,  
And dede over al, shame ynogh.

<sup>1</sup> accustomed to dwell.

<sup>2</sup> same.

<sup>3</sup> became.

<sup>4</sup> withdrew.

<sup>5</sup> seeing that dwelt.

<sup>6</sup> slew.



Al that he fonde withoute house,  
 Thys dragun slogh so marveylouse;  
 So moche folke gan he quelle<sup>7</sup>,  
 Men seyde, he was a fende of helle.  
 Alle the folke of that cuntre  
 Cunseyled hem what that myght be.  
 They armyd hem alle at here myght,  
 Agens the dragun for to fyght.  
 But noun of hem myght undyrstande,  
 Wher the dragun was wonande<sup>8</sup>.

Befel hyt that yche<sup>9</sup> tyde,  
 An Ermyte wonede<sup>10</sup> ther besyde.  
 A gode man and ryght eerteyn  
 Dwelled beside that wasteyn<sup>11</sup>.  
 One of hem gaf cunseyl tyte<sup>12</sup>  
 That they shulde go to that ermyte:  
 And aske cunseyl of swyche a dede,  
 In hope alle the bettyr to spede.—

They go to the Hermit: he bids them to shrive themselves, and do penance for three days: they obey: he prays, and an angel descends.

The Aungel said to the ermyte.  
 “ Do sumne<sup>13</sup> the folk astyle<sup>14</sup>  
 “ That they come alle hedyr  
 “ Before the, eeh one togedyr.  
 “ Y shal be your alther<sup>15</sup> ledere  
 “ That the dragun you nat dere<sup>16</sup>.”

The folk echone<sup>17</sup> thedyr com.  
 The Aungel before hem gan gon.  
 And led hem to that wasteyn,  
 That sum tyme was a stede<sup>18</sup> certeyn  
 Unto a place they yede<sup>19</sup> echone,  
 And ther they fonde a tumbe of stone.  
 The Aungel bad hem lyft up the lydde,  
 And as he bad ryght so they dydde.

“ Her,”

<sup>7</sup> began to kill.

<sup>8</sup> was dwelling.

<sup>9</sup> same.

<sup>10</sup> Hermit dwelt.

<sup>11</sup> desert.

<sup>12</sup> settled, or firm.

<sup>13</sup> summon.

<sup>14</sup> immediately.

<sup>15</sup> chief leader.

<sup>16</sup> hurt.

<sup>17</sup> each one.

<sup>18</sup> an inhabited place.

<sup>19</sup> went.

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“ Her,” he seyde, “ ys hys wonnyng <sup>20</sup> ”  
 “ With another wykked thyng.  
 “ Drede you noght, though he be founde,  
 “ For all hys power haue y bounde.”  
 Whan they had the tounge otwynne <sup>21</sup>,  
 The folk stode and loked withynne.  
 They sagh a woman there vyly lye :  
 And her body claued in tway partye <sup>22</sup>.  
 Betwene tho tway partys, the dragon lay  
 Gresly to see with grete affray....Brunne’s Manuel, MS.

<sup>20</sup> dwelling.<sup>21</sup> opened.<sup>22</sup> two parts.

This lady, thus cut in pieces, had been an unfaithful wife.—We must not suppose, from these tales, that Brunne was an enemy to the fair sex : he praises virtuous ladies warmly : Thus—

- - - - Nothyng is to man so dere,  
 As womanys love yn gode manere.  
 A gode woman ys mannys blyss,  
 Wher her love ryght and stedfast ys.  
 Ther ys no solace undyr hevene,  
 Of al that a man may nevene <sup>1</sup>,  
 That shuld a man so moche glew <sup>2</sup>  
 As a gode woman that loveth trew.  
 Ne derer is none yn Goddy’s hurde <sup>3</sup>  
 Than a chaste woman with lovely wurde....Brunne’s Manuel, MS.

<sup>1</sup> name.<sup>2</sup> delight.<sup>3</sup> family.

Brunne gives a remarkable instance of his religious liberality, in a tale condemning a Priest for wishing a Saracen’s damnation, who had been converted, but had renounced his Christianity. He first gives his principle, and then his story. His principle is—

GOD seyth thys wurde to shew us the way.  
 “ Y wyl that none synful deye.  
 “ To leve hys synne he shal have space ;  
 “ And turne agen to lyfe and grace.  
 “ Whatsoever he have done  
 “ Y wyl nat his dampnacione.”

He



He illustrates this by a tale of a priest named Carpus, and of  
a Saracen:—

Thys Prest thurgh prechyng and sawe <sup>1</sup>  
Brought a Sarasyn to Crystyn lawe.  
Another Sarasyn of Paynye,  
Hadde therwyth grete envye:  
And turnede thys man to hym ageyn,  
And our Crystendom was alle veyn.  
Thys prest tharefor was sory,  
And hated thys man felunly.  
And preyde God, he wulde hym sende  
Dampnaeyon withouten ende.

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To correct this furious and uncharitable priest, Brunne states  
that a vision was sent:—

Thys Prest lay yn hys bed a nyght  
And, gostly, he sawe a syght.  
He sagh <sup>2</sup> a swythe merveylous brygge <sup>3</sup>  
Over the depe pytte gan lygge <sup>4</sup>.  
The plank that on the brygge was,  
Was as sleder <sup>5</sup> as any glas.  
But yn the pyt that was therundyr,  
He sagh so moche sorowe and wundyr  
Of fendes fele <sup>6</sup> that there wore,  
Thogh y tolde moche yyt wer ther more.  
But shortly to telle fro.  
The man he sawe on the brygge go,  
Yn ful grete peryl and kare,  
And ever yn poynt to mysfare <sup>7</sup>.  
Yn poynt he was to falle adowne  
Of hys hede formest the crowne.  
The fendes that wer yn the pytte  
Smote upwarde gyf they myght hym hytte.  
And addres <sup>8</sup> bite him by the fete.

He

<sup>1</sup> discourse.

<sup>2</sup> saw.

<sup>3</sup> bridge.

<sup>4</sup> begin to be laid.

<sup>5</sup> slippery.

<sup>6</sup> many.

<sup>7</sup> mis-step.

<sup>8</sup> adders.

He says that the Priest was delighted to see the Saracen in this peril, and prayed that he might fall down into the pit among the fiends,

And there withoutyn ende be,  
For he turned away fro the.

But the Priest's eye was, at this wish, attracted upwards:

Hym thought the rofe<sup>9</sup> was clove yn two,  
And the sky opened also.

There he saw our Saviour on the cross, with "hys wundys alle bloody," who thus rebuked the unforgiving Christian:

"Carpus!" he seyde, "Se wyth thyn eyne,  
"What y suffred for mannys pyne.  
"Man to save, y lete me slo<sup>10</sup>.  
"Why wust<sup>11</sup> thou dampne hym to wo?  
"Why hast thou hym so moche wyth ylle,  
"Whan for mankynde y lete me spylle?  
"With pyne and hard passyon,  
"My bode I gaf for hys raunsun.  
"Why wust thou he hadde helle fere<sup>12</sup>,  
"Syn y have boght hym so dere?  
"Yyt were I redy man to beye<sup>13</sup>,  
"Ere man wythouten ende shulde deye.  
"Tharfor, wyth gode devocyon,  
"PRAY FOR MANNYS SALVACYON."....Brunne's Manuel, MS.

<sup>9</sup> roof.    <sup>10</sup> myself be slain.    <sup>11</sup> wishest.    <sup>12</sup> fire.    <sup>13</sup> buy.

This is an extraordinary effort of reason and benevolence for the reign of Edward the First.

But Brunne is never more successful than when he is pleading the cause of humanity. His tale of the Justice, who oppressed the poor, is told in his best manner:

For hard dome<sup>1</sup> and covetyse,  
Y shal you telle of swych a Justyce—  
Of hym the worde ful wyde sprong,  
He gaf hard dome and otherwhyte wrong.

<sup>1</sup> judgment.

Gode



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Gode men ofte hym besoght,  
 For the porc that he wo wrought,  
 That he shulde have on hem merey,  
 And pylle <sup>2</sup> hem nat but mesurly:  
 That they myght lyve yn pes<sup>3</sup> by hym,  
 And he nat so agens hem grym.  
 Was hys answer and hys sawe,  
 “ Y shal do hem nothyng but lawe.”

This severe Magistrate, who would do nothing but law in all its rigour, at length fell sick, and all hoped that he would die:—

Hys syknes wax harde and strong,  
 That he myght nat lyve long—  
 Men that sate aboute hys bedde  
 Were agast and sore adredde:  
 And hopyd wel and understode,  
 That hire drede was for no gode.  
 Alle they behelde hym faste,  
 And *sawe hys colour ofte overcaste*;  
*And wroth<sup>4</sup> aboute to and fro.*  
 Hys bedde hem thoght wulde eleve in two.  
 And he cryde with a loud cry,  
 “ Lorde! have on me mercy.”

Than spake a voyce yn the sky,  
 That alle hyt herde that stode hym by.

“ Thou haddest never of man pytee;  
 “ Ne y shal never have noun of the.”....Brunner's Manuel, MS.

.. <sup>2</sup> pillage them.      <sup>3</sup> peace.      <sup>4</sup> writhed.

The same desire of protecting the weaker part of society from the power and violence of the strong, seems to have actuated him in the tale of a Knight, who was in a state of punishment after death, for having robbed others. The importance of the impression which he wished to create by this narration, we may estimate by recollecting, that his sovereign, Edward I. had, when prince, encouraged his knights in these practices. He begins with stating, that  
 there

there were two knights who were greatly attached to each other,  
and that one of them died :—

A sykeness on the toun gan falle.  
He deyde sone as we shul alle.  
The t'outher knyght seyde ofte " Alass !"  
For his felawe so sone dede was.  
Fel hyt so, thys lyvyng knyght,  
Yn hys bed he lay a nyght ;  
And was yn swyche a wakyng,  
That he myght slepe for no thyng.  
The mone shone yn chaumbre flore.  
The knyght lay and lokyd before.  
At a windowe eame yn a beme <sup>1</sup>,  
And yn the shynyng he sagh a gleme,  
Ryghtlyche that knyght every deyl,  
That sum tyme he loved ful weyl.  
Thys knyght thoght—' Hyt ys fantome,  
' That I see thus yn the mone come.'  
He was afrayd withoute fayle,  
And that was no grete merveyle.  
But the knyght that was dede,  
Cumfortyd hym sone and seyde his rede.

" Be not adred for hyt, Amy !  
" That thou lovedyst so speecyaly.  
" Y was thy felaw, thy trewe frere.  
" For help y come to the now here—  
" Help me now ; y am yn wo  
" That y may come the sonner therfro."

The knyght that lay yn hys bed,  
Was bolder and lesse adred :  
And seyde, ' Felaw ! for charite,  
' What ys thy wo ? Shew hyt me.'  
Than spake to hym the dede knyght  
" Thogh y had space a day and a nyght  
" Alle the penaunce ne coude y telle,  
" That y suffre yn a welle.  
" A peyne y suffre, hard for the nones.  
" *For a clothe that y refte ones,*

<sup>1</sup> beam of light.



" Of a pour man, withoute ryght.  
 " Alas that ever y saw that syght.  
 " That clothe ys caste on me to peyne,  
 " As hevy as any mounteyne.  
 " Hyl ne mounteyne, erthe ne stone  
 " Under hevене so hevy ys none ;  
 " No so hote fyre ys yn no land  
 " As hyt ys aboute me brennand.  
 " Tharfore, felawe, y pray the,  
 " That thou have on me pite ;  
 " *And to pore men do non ylle.*".... Brunne's Manuel, MS.

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His vision of the next world makes an attempt at fancy, and the contrast he presents has some effect:—

I sagh <sup>1</sup> a brygge of moche wundyr,  
 All grymly watyr was therundyr.  
 Blak and depe and ful stynkyngge,  
 Dredeful noyse hyt made rynnynge,  
 Dunward yn to helle hyt gede <sup>2</sup>,  
 Whan y sagh hyt y hadde grete drede.  
 Begunde that brygge was a cuntre,  
 The feyreste that ever God lete be.  
 As a medew hyt was grene  
 So feyr of syght ys non y wene.  
 So ful of flourys logh and hygh.  
 And saveryd swete as spycerye—  
 Y sagh there housys of ful ryche atyre  
 All of gletyryng golde as fyre.  
 Blesful bryghtnes was thereynne  
 The syght was cely and welthe to wynne.  
 Some were caste with riche colours,  
 And feyr peynted with frutte and floures.  
 The brigge that over the watyr lay ;  
 Hyt was ever of swyche asay,  
 That therovere myght no man passe  
 But he were clene of every trespass. .... Brunne's Manuel, MS.

<sup>1</sup> saw.

<sup>2</sup> went.

To give more of an author so antiquated, would only weary the  
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reader. But as he is the first of our vernacular poets who wrote in a style that is at all readable now, and as the work from which the above quotations are taken exhibits the infant state of our most valuable branch of poetry, and has never before been submitted to the notice of the public, I have thought that the above specimens would not be uninteresting. Perhaps another tale will not be wholly unacceptable, as it is the most ancient instance that I have seen of an attempt in our language at a humorous tale. I must not be understood as putting the inartificial humour of our venerable Brunne in competition with the polished carelessness and easy elegance of Prior; but it may amuse to see this pleasing class of composition in its most rude and homely state. It is a tale which Brunne tells of one Peter, or Pers, a miser and a usurer, and of whom a traveller laid a wager, that, hard hearted as he was, something might be got from him by begging:—

- - - - Pers was okerere <sup>1</sup> ,	<sup>1</sup> usurer.
And was swythe <sup>2</sup> covetous,	<sup>2</sup> very.
And a nygun <sup>3</sup> and avarous;	<sup>3</sup> niggard.
And gadred pens <sup>4</sup> unto store	<sup>4</sup> pence.
As okerers down every hore <sup>5</sup> .	<sup>5</sup> hour.
Befyl hyt so, upon a day,	
That pore men sat yn the way;	
And spred her hatren on her barme <sup>6</sup> ,	<sup>6</sup> spread their vestments on their bosom.
Agens the sonne that was warme;	
And rekened the custome houses echoun <sup>7</sup> ,	<sup>7</sup> each one.
At whych they had gode <sup>8</sup> , and at whych noun.	<sup>8</sup> goods.
As they spak of many what,	
Come Pers forth yn thar gat <sup>9</sup>	<sup>9</sup> way.
Than eche one that sat and stode.	
"Her comth Pers that never dyd gode."	
Echon seyde to other jangland <sup>10</sup> .	<sup>10</sup> chattering.
"They toke never gode at Pers hand;	
"Ne noun pore man never shal have,	
"Coude he never so weyl crave."	



One of hem began to sey,  
 ‘ A wajour dar <sup>11</sup> y wyth yow lay, <sup>11</sup> dare.  
 ‘ That y shal have some gode at hym,  
 ‘ Be he never so gryl <sup>12</sup>, ne grym.’ <sup>12</sup> angry.  
 To that wajour they graunted alle,  
 To gyve hym a gyft, gyf so myght befall.  
 Thys man upsterte, and toke the gate <sup>13</sup> <sup>13</sup> way.  
 Tyl he com at Pers gate.  
 As he stode style and bode the quede <sup>14</sup>, <sup>14</sup> uttered his request.  
 One cam wyth an asse, charged wyth brede <sup>15</sup>. <sup>15</sup> bread.  
 That yche <sup>16</sup> brede, Pers had boght, <sup>16</sup> same.  
 And to hys hous shuld hyt be broght.  
 He sagh <sup>17</sup> Pers com ther wythalle, <sup>17</sup> saw.  
 The pore thoght, ‘ now aske y shal.’  
 ‘ Y aske the, Sun <sup>18</sup>, gode pur charite; <sup>18</sup> Son.  
 ‘ Pers ! gyf thy wyl be.’  
 Pers stode, and loked on hym  
 Felauliche wyth ygen <sup>19</sup> grym. <sup>19</sup> eyes.  
 He stouped down to seke a stone  
 But as hap was, than fonde he none.  
 For the stone he toke a lofe,  
 And at the poore man hym drofe.  
 The pore man hent <sup>20</sup> yt up—belyve— <sup>20</sup> seized.  
 And was therof ful ferly <sup>21</sup> blythe. <sup>21</sup> suddenly.  
 To hys felawes fast he ran—  
 “ Lo ” he seyde—“ what y have ;  
 “ Of Pers a gyft ; so God me save.”... Brunne’s Manuel, MS.

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He shewed the loaf, which his begging had provoked Pers to throw at him instead of a stone ; and his companions admitted that he had won his wager.

To the credit of the English clergy of the fourteenth century, it may be remarked, that they contributed much to the growth and popularity of English poetry at that time. By becoming versifiers, they sanctified the Muse in the opinion of their contemporaries. And among these early labourers in our Parnassus,

Hermit of  
Hampole’s  
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Richard Rolle, the hermit of Hampole, ought not to be forgotten. His poem, called "The Prikke of Conscience"<sup>15</sup>, was expressly written for those who could understand only English<sup>16</sup>, and contains from nine to ten thousand lines, rhymed. His description of the fourteen pains of the infernal world is not without some rude imagination. He makes the first pain, Fire:—

That fire is so hote and evere brenneth  
That fire alle the water that stondesth or renneth,  
That is in the sea, other owher elles  
Thorough alle the worlde, as clerkes telles,  
Yette hit myght nought thereof quench a fote  
Tho hit runne into that fire that is so hote  
No more thanne o drope of water a quenche myghte  
Alle the world yif hit brenned lighte.

He makes the second pain, Cold:—

Ac that colde is so stronge and kene,  
That tho the most stow that is owher isene;  
Other the most mounteyne that is in ony londe  
Were iturned into a firy bronde,  
And amyddes that colde wer yset don  
Yet hit sholde frese and turne into yse anon.

The

<sup>15</sup> I quote from the MS. of it in the Biblioth. Regis. 18. A 5.—He is thus named in a passage quoted by Warton:—He died 1349—

In perfit living which passeth poysie  
Richard, Hermite, contemplative of sentence,  
Drough in Englishe 'The Prick of Conscience.' Lydg. Boc.

<sup>16</sup> Towards the end he says,

Now I have, firste as I undertoke,  
Fulfilled the sevene matieres of this boke.  
And oute of Latyn I have hem idrawe;  
The whiche to som man is unknowe.  
And namely, to lewed men of Yngelonde,  
That konneth nothings but Englishe understonde.  
And therfor this tretys outedrawe I wolde  
In Englishe; that men undirstonde hit sholde.  
And *Prikke of Conscience* in this tretys yhote.  
The whiche to mannes soule is best bote.

Hampole, MS. Bib. Reg. 18. A 5.



The fifth pain is Thirst:—

For so grete thurst ther shal be  
That here hertes to cleveth as I telle the—  
Galle of dragouns here wyn shal be  
And venym of addres therewith seith he.

The sixth, Darkness:—

The whiche is as grete atte mydday  
As atte mydnyght and that lasteth ay.  
For in helle nys nevere day ac evere nyght,  
When brenneth fire ac hit yeveth no lyght.  
Ac yutte the synful man shal openly see,  
Alle the sorowe and the peyne that therinne shal be,  
And evere turment and every peyne  
Thorough sparkles of that fire in certeyne.

The eighth Pain—

Is the horrible vermyn and venemous,  
And wylde bestes that beth horrible and grym—  
With woodnesse drawynge into helle wel scene  
And addres fast knawyng be the bone—  
And that vermyn shal evere on hem crepe,  
And on hem fastneth here clawes wel depe  
And hem bylappe on eche side aboute  
And eche lym gnawe withinne and withoute :  
And vermyn shal be alle here clothinge  
And vermyn shal be alle here beddyng.

The eleventh is the Weeping:—

And here teres shulleth evere laste  
And here teres shulleth so grete hete have—  
That the water that fro here eyen doth renne  
Thanne shall hem scaldy and brenne—  
For hit shall be hotter thanne ever was  
Ony lede imulte, other ony bras.

On the fourteenth, Despair, he says—

- - - Hy shulleth desire for to dye,  
Ac deth shal nought come in here weye.  
And eche of hem shal have othir in hate,  
And evere amonge hem shal be gret debate :  
And full of wrathe hy shulleth be thanne  
And eche of hem shal other warye and banne.

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After these dismal pictures, it may amuse the reader to know how this versifying Hermit sketches his Heaven:—

- - - There is lyf withoute ony deth  
And ther is youthe without ony elde;  
And ther is alle manner welthe to welde:  
And ther is reste without ony travaille—  
And ther is pees withoute ony strife  
And ther is alle mannere likynge of lyf—  
And ther is bright somer ever to se  
And ther is nevere wynter in that euntree—  
And ther is more worshipec and honour,  
Thanne evere hadde kynge other emperour.  
And ther is grete melodee of Aungeles songe,  
And ther is preysing hem amonge.  
And ther is alle maner frendshipe that may be,  
And ther is evere perfect love and charite;  
And ther is wisdom without folye;  
And ther is honeste without vilenye;  
All these a man may joyes of hevene eall.  
Ac yutte the most sovereyn joye of alle,  
Is the sight of Goddes bright faee  
In wham resteth alle manere grace.

Hampole, MS. Bib. Reg. 18. A 5.

There is another moral and religious poem, tremendous in its length, for when complete it must have contained from forty to fifty thousand lines, written after the above, and with more perfect rhythm; of which a parchment manuscript much burnt, but very neatly written, still exists in the British Museum<sup>17</sup>. Of this, one extract, of an apparition, may be cited as a specimen both of its style and metrical fluency. It begins with friars going to sing the funeral masses for a corpse they buried:—

- - - Thai war twenty freres  
Alsamyn<sup>1</sup> withouten seculeres,  
And alsamyn so thai went  
To Gyes hows with gude entent.

<sup>1</sup> altogether.

And

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<sup>17</sup> It is in the Cotton Library, Tiberius, E 7.



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And in that hows said thai and he  
 ‘ Placebo’ with the ‘ Dirige.’  
 For his saul that was husband thare,  
 And for all saules that sufferd care.

When all was said in gude degre,  
 Till ‘ requiescant in pace,’  
 Thai herd a Voice cum tham beside,  
 Als it did at that other tide.

Like a besom by tham it went  
 That war swepeand<sup>2</sup> on a pament.  
 Sum of the folk tharfore war flaid<sup>3</sup>;  
 And sone the Prior unto it said.

<sup>2</sup> was sweeping.<sup>3</sup> fled.

“ I conjore ye, with main and mode,  
 In the vertu of Christes blode,  
 In this stede that you stand still;  
 And answer what we ask ye will.”

Than the Voice, with wordes meke,  
 Als a man that had bene seke,  
 Until the Prior thus gan say.

“ Why deres<sup>4</sup> you me thus ilk day?  
 It es naght lang sen<sup>5</sup> I tald ye,  
 All that you wald ask of me.

<sup>4</sup> hurt.<sup>5</sup> since.

What sold<sup>6</sup> I now say to you here?”

<sup>6</sup> should.

And than answered another frere  
 And anowre<sup>7</sup> of grete clergi.

<sup>7</sup> another.

He said, “ Tell here till us in hi  
 Whether that thou of pain be quit,  
 Or els what pain you sufferes yitt.”

The Voice answered sore onane,  
 And said, “ I love God al his lane.<sup>8</sup>  
 For swilk grace unto me is graid<sup>9</sup>  
 Thurgh messes that war for me said  
 That fro this time now efterward  
 Am I past fra all paynes hard<sup>10</sup>.”

<sup>8</sup> for his favours.<sup>9</sup> ordered.

Another English poem, called *The Pilgrim*, exists in manuscript,  
 which is a dialogue between a pilgrim and several virtues and  
 vices.

<sup>10</sup> MS. Cott. Lib. Tib. E 7.

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vices<sup>19</sup>. It is a didactic poem, attempting moral satire, and therefore is entitled to notice in the history of our poetry<sup>20</sup>. As a moral and religious satire, the alliterative work of Piers Plouhman, remarkable for its freedoms with the religious of his day, and for being written without rhyme, claims also both perusal and commendation<sup>21</sup>. Several effusions of genius appear in the songs and ballads of our ancestors, which the taste of our poetical antiquaries within the last fifty years has rescued from oblivion<sup>22</sup>. The historical poem of Barbour we have already quoted, and ought not to be neglected. The poems of Adam Davie may be here recollected.

<sup>19</sup> It is in the Cott. Lib. MS. Tiberius, A 7.  
It contains above 4000 lines.

<sup>20</sup> The following verses are attached in it to a coloured drawing, which exhibits a man shewing his chest of gold to the pilgrim, who looks fearfully at it, and praying; while a little devil is seated on the man's head: a stone coffin is near, of which Death is taking off the lid, and shewing a corpse within.

Now wole I speke of my mawmet.  
And off myn ydol that is so oold,  
Made of silver and off gold.  
In the whiche and the ensure,  
Is the ymage and the figure,  
And the prynte, as thou mayst see,  
Off the Lord of the contre.  
This is the God whiche hy depos  
Loveth to be schutte in hucches clos—  
This God kan make folkys blynde  
That to his observaunce hem bynde  
And causith hem ageyne resoun  
To caste her lokes lowe down—

In eerthe is hoolly ther labour;  
In eerthe is also ther tresour.  
Eerthe is ther joye, and ther plesaunce,  
Nothyng but erthe may hem avaunce.

MS. Tiber. A 7.

<sup>21</sup> Mr. Whittaker has made his edition of the Visions of this author valuable by his commentary and notes.—His Crede has been also republished. — As Mr. Warton has written fully on this author, I would refer the reader to his work.

<sup>22</sup> To Dr. Percy, Mr. Warton, and Mr. Ritson, we are principally indebted on this subject. They led the way, and first brought the venerable remains from the neglected MSS. of our libraries, to the public sight. Mr. Warton's History of English Poetry gave a connexion and luminous illustration to these long forgotten remains, and pointed the way to succeeding investigators. Mr. George Ellis has since made this subject more generally interesting.



# HISTORY

## OF

# ENGLAND.

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### CHAP. II.

#### ON THE ENGLISH ROMANCES.

**I**N this stage of the history of our Poetry, our ancient vernacular Romances deserve our attention, from their intrinsic merit and important effects. They belong to a class of compositions, with which the gravest of us have been delighted in the morning of our lives, and which most of us still value in their best form, although the severer taste of our maturity exacts superior requisites. All romances and tales being the offspring of the imagination, they derive their birth from one of the great sources of poetry, and they usually display, especially those of distinguished merit, the charms and excellencies of every part of the Parnassian region. Though often wearisome, yet in some passages they recreate our fancy—by others they agitate the sensibility—in others they gratify the cultivated taste. Fictitious, or allowed to be so, in every part; in their characters, incidents, and dialogue; they are confined by no limits but those of probability, while they relate to human beings; and of possibility beyond them: except indeed those rules of moral decorum, which no sane writer will violate. These friendly

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boundaries are so undefined and so moveable, and admit so vast an extent of range, that genius in its fictions, has all the kingdoms of nature at its command, and may appropriate and use whatever they contain. It may, like Shakespear, exhaust known worlds, and then imagine new. The mind will never cease to hail its flights, to welcome its combinations, and to urge it to fresh exertions. We love to wander in the ideal world; we are thankful to the writer who provides the banquet for our fancy; and hence the romance writer has in every age commanded eager readers. Not that the same fictions always please. It is the class of composition, not the individual work, which never ceases to interest. Every particular romance is necessarily a perishable production, because in every age the actors and their manners have to be varied, to suit the new feelings, and to rise up to the new ideas which mankind are always obtaining, and which time, ever moving onwards, will not suffer to be stationary. Theagenes and Chariclea; all the heroes of Arthur and Charlemagne; Kyng Alesandre, and Richard Cœur de Lion; Amadis de Gaul, and the Destruction of Troy; Troilus and Cressid; the Chronicle of the Cid; Cassandra, Clelia, and the Arcadia; have all had their day—each has delighted thousands in its turn—and all are passing quietly to that oblivious tomb, where none but a tasteful antiquary, with his occasional curiosity, can be expected to disturb them.

It was in the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, that romances were so highly popular that they constituted almost the only reading of the great, the fair, and the unlearned world. Even the clergy themselves yielded to the fashion. They were not only among the earliest composers and translators of the romances for the laity; but they indulged themselves in an emulous composition of legends, to the full as fictitious; often as fanciful; and



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and if not always as interesting, yet more venerated than the popular tales. Indeed from the eleventh century, till scholastic logic, military tactics, natural philosophy, mathematics, astrology, ethical reasonings, religious warfare, and the increasing business and political schemes of life, absorbed the largest portion of the mind of the day, the exercise of the imagination was the great character of the intellect of Europe; it was mingled with every thing; it actuated every one. It was the pervading feature of the established theology: it filled heaven with saints; purgatory with sinners; and earth with relics, transubstantiation, heresies, miracles, and monks. It made all religion, all life, a romance. It wafted all the kings and statesmen of Europe, for nearly two centuries, to Palestine. It crept into history; it characterized geography; it governed medicine; it influenced astronomy; it identified itself with chemistry. It haunted even the schoolmen. It seems only to have been excluded from the stern tribunals of law, into which fancy never comes, or comes by stealth; where she is always unwelcome and necessarily discouraged, and from which she is soon contented or compelled to depart.

The English romances that are now extant have, with few exceptions, been translated from the French. The most ancient is *Sir Tristrem*, assumed with great probability to have been written by Thomas the Rhymer, in the thirteenth century<sup>1</sup>. The next in antiquity, and for some time deemed the oldest, is ‘*The Geste of Kyng Horn*’<sup>2</sup>. The romance of Richard Cœur de Lion should be placed earlier than *Kyng Horn*, if the English work be that alluded to by Robert of Gloucester and Brunne; but its style is certainly later

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Walter Scott has published this romance from the Auchinleck MSS. with an introduction, appendixes, arguments and notes; and the description and abstract of two French romances, on the same subject, by Mr. George Ellis: all valuable and curious.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Ritson published this in his *Ancient English Metrical Romances*, vol. 2. pp. 91—155, with the ancient “*Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild*,” in his notes, vol. 3. pp. 282—320. He assigns it to the end of the reign of Edw. I, or to that of Edw. II.

later than the first, and probably than the last of these authors<sup>3</sup>. The pleasing tale of Ywaine and Gawin, has been referred to the time of Richard II<sup>4</sup>. ‘Kyng Alesaundre’, a spirited romance<sup>5</sup>; the Kyng of Tars; Le beaus Desconus; and Emare<sup>6</sup>; may belong to the fourteenth century. Others have been printed, of dates subsequent to the former, or less certain, by Mr. Ritson<sup>7</sup> and Mr. Weber<sup>8</sup>. Several others have been described by Mr. Ellis<sup>9</sup>.

These romances vary in merit. In Sir Tristrem, the “turn of phrase is close, nervous, and concise, even to obscurity—there is an elliptical mode of narration adopted, which rather hints at than details the story<sup>10</sup>.” Kyng Horn has a pleasing strain of natural feeling, and is simply told in an artless and rude, but not vulgar style. Richard is flowing and diffuse, and sometimes animated and impressive. Ywain is superior to Kyng Horn. In many parts the narration glides with an easy yet impressive felicity, and fixes the attention with considerable power. Kyng Alesaundre deserves the encomium of its editor<sup>11</sup>. Some of these romances exhibit a more continuous

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Weber has edited this in his *Metrical Romances*, vol. 2. pp. 3—278. It is certainly an interesting specimen of the popular tales of this celebrated king. It contains 7136 lines, rhymed in couplets.

<sup>4</sup> It is in Ritson’s *Collection*, vol. 1. pp. 1—169.

<sup>5</sup> It is the first in Mr. Weber’s publication, vol. 1. pp. 3—327, where it appears in 8033 rhyming lines.

<sup>6</sup> These are in Ritson, vol. 2, and have considerable merit. Their length is various: King of Tars, 1148 lines; Le beaus Desconus, 2130; and Emare, 1035.

<sup>7</sup> Ritson has added in his *Collection*, Sir Launfal, 1040 lines; Sir Orpheo, 510; Le bone Florence of Rome, 2189 lines; The Erle of Tolous, 1218 lines; the Squyr of lowe degre, 1132 lines; and The Knyght of Curtesy, and The Fair Lady of Faguell, 500 lines.

<sup>8</sup> Mr. Weber’s publication contains, besides those already noticed, Sir Cleges, 540 lines; Lai le fraigne, 402; the Lyfe of Ipomydon, 2346; Amis and Amiloun, 2495; the Process of the Sevyng Sages, 4002; Octovian Imperator, 1962; Sir Amadas, 778; the Hunttyng of the Hare, 270 lines.

<sup>9</sup> In his “*Specimens of early English Metrical Romances*, chiefly written during the early part of the Fourteenth Century,” in three volumes.

<sup>10</sup> W. Scott’s introduction, pp. lxxx & lxxxi.

<sup>11</sup> “Few English Romances can boast of a greater share of good poetry. The lines are less burdened with expletives, and exhibit far better versification, than those of other poems of the time, and frequently possess an energy which we little expect.” Weber’s *Introd.* p. xxxiii.



continuous flow of metrical melody, than the other contemporary poetry. Most of them are translations from more ancient Norman French originals<sup>12</sup>, though frequently with improvements<sup>13</sup>. Of the 'Squyr of lowe degre' no French original has been traced, and it has been pronounced to be a genuine English performance<sup>14</sup>. This circumstance makes it interesting to us; and though diffuse at times, even to prolixity, it deserves considerable attention, for approaching more to the features and language of the higher style of narrative poetry, than most of the preceding. It has the form and gait of something better, though it is often the protracted shadow instead of the living reality: yet there is a cultivated manner about it, spirited attempts at description, a fluency of elocution, pictures of manners, occasional expressions of feeling, and at times a strength of diction, which make us regret that the author had not the taste to select and compress, as well as the power to expatiate and the desire to detail<sup>15</sup>.

It may be considered by some as a reproach to the memory of our forefathers, that they should have been so fond of fictions, which frowning philosophy now consigns to the nursery, and chides even beauty for regarding. But, independently of the just remark of our great Moralist, that whatever withdraws us from the dominion of the present, advances us in the dignity of rational beings—a power pre-eminently the prerogative of romance, as well in the amusement

<sup>12</sup> "No Romance of English rhyme has been hitherto discovered or mentioned to exist before Edward I.; towards the end of which, Hornchild, a translation or imitation from the French, appeared." Ritson's Diss. vol. 1. p. 87.—Mr. Weber's opinion is, that "all the English Romances, with the exception of the St. Graal, Percival, and Launfal, are anonymous. They are generally, perhaps in every case, translations from the French, and at least a century later." Weber, Introd. p. xvii.

<sup>13</sup> "In general they have been shortened to at least one-half of their original length." Weber, xvii. I consider this reduction, for the most part, an improvement.

<sup>14</sup> Ritson's Met. Rom. vol. 3. p. 344; and Dissert. vol. 1. p. 95.

<sup>15</sup> See it in Ritson, vol. 3. pp. 145—192. As this romance has such pretensions, as yet unshaken, to be considered as an original English composition, I confess that I read it with peculiar interest.

amusement which it affords us, as in the improvement to which it urges us—reflection also suggests, that the feeling which cherishes the works of imagination, is not only natural, but has been, as well as these discredited compositions, auxiliary to the civilization and promotive of the happiness of society, and may still be powerfully contributive to its future advancement. In every shape and form, they seem to exhibit the mind escaping, to use our Sidney's metaphor, from our brazen into the golden age. Most dissimilar in merit as all human minds are, romances are still so many little Utopias, in which the writer tries to paint or to inculcate something which he considers to be more useful, more happy or more delightful, more excellent or more interesting, than the world he lives in—than the characters he surveys, or the events or evils which he experiences. Absurd will be the speculations of the absurd; depraved, even the elysium of the depraved. It requires a rare combination of genius, knowledge, and judgment, to discern the true features of the beau ideal, or to paint with effect the charming visions of the fancy. It is not every mind that forms just notions of the attainable perfections of the human character. Though every poet tries to paint the excellencies of his personages as vividly as he is able, yet his own conceptions must be the limit of their merits. The monk, the vikingr, the minstrel, the knight, the philosopher, and the enthusiast, have, each, a peculiar beau ideal, which, if they should write romances, they would not fail to display. The romance writers in every age have made this display; and it is from this habit, which they could not avoid, that society has so greatly benefited. From the roman of Horn Child, to Sir Charles Grandison, we still have the representations of the beau ideal of their authors' minds, either exhibited in the favourite characters or in the deterring contrast of obnoxious ones. In their works of imagination, almost all writers, from the natural desire of



of exalting their heroes and heroines, use an Utopian pencil, and endeavour to give us either the best of what exists in actual society, or more usually something better, according as they conceive that better to be. Exalted minds take lofty flights, and paint a Sarpedon, a Hector, and a Telemachus. Inferior tastes produce inferior pictures, but still aim at what they deem excellence. The monastic legendary rose in his saintly biography to *his* brightest image of earthly perfection; and with the same feeling Amadis de Gaul was intended to represent every knightly grace in its richest state of desert. Romances have thus been perpetually operating to improve the world, where their writers' state of mind and conceptions have been capable of benefiting it. Not that the authors have always had moral utility distinctly in their contemplation. They meant merely to depict the effusions of their fancy; but fancy, from its own natural tendency, independent of any deliberate volition, always builds its castles and paints its scenery as nobly and as interestingly as it is able. Nature interweaves the spirit of improvement so sagaciously with all our faculties, that they must be greatly perverted before their exercise can be useless. No man has ever painted wickedness, believing it to be such, for the purpose of recommending it to the practice of his readers. Demons only could be capable of such malignity. If authors with corrupted minds have written corrupting works, it has been because, from the influence of ruined taste or bad passions, they have for the time believed that the depravity was the preferable conduct. But their evil example is no exception to the remark, that the writer in his tale, romance, or poem, puts forth the best mind he has, displays the best feelings that he possesses, and draws the best characters that he can appreciate, or is accustomed to conceive. From the natural desire of reputation, every man performs the task which he allots to himself as ably as he can; and as the great prepon-

preponderance of nature is always to good, society has been on the whole perpetually a gainer by the romances, tales, poetry and dramas, of its authors, notwithstanding the alloy of some individual eccentricities. Fictitious compositions are so many concentrations of the scattered virtues of life; so many personifications of whatever is amiable and admirable in the manners or conceptions of the day. Chaucer, in his *Palamon and Troilus*, painted knightly merit as high as he could fancy it. Gower composed his series of tales avowedly for the purpose of benefiting his readers: and the romancers, as well as Occleve and Lydgate, like Virgil formerly in his *Æneid*, and Xenophon in his *Cyropedia*, laboured to the same end, as certainly, though less avowedly, as Brunne in his ‘*Handlyng of Synne*,’ or our worthy Hermit in his ‘*Prikke of Conscience*,’ and his fellow rhymers in the *Pilgrim*. We may indeed say, that most of the romances of our forefathers were advantageous in some respect or other to the progress of their social life. In every one, some vice is made revolting, and some virtue interesting. And though sir Anthony Wydville in the fifteenth century, like sir Philip Sidney in the next, might, from other instruction, be too accomplished to need such tutors, yet there were myriads below them in England to whom the humblest tale was a lesson of morals and manners, in some point or other. The inferior intellect needs the inferior writer, as much as the excelling mind demands something that is even more excellent than itself. The lowest traveller in life has to be improved as well as the most accomplished; and it is probable that our best romances and tales have been, on the whole, nearly as efficacious in their moral operations as our sermons and our ethics. They have at least been great auxiliaries. Society would not have been what it is, without them. If Alexander formed himself on Achilles, we may suspect that the Black Prince was not uninfluenced by Arthur and his knights.



It is amusing to remark, not only how the romances of one age are superseded by those which follow, but also, how their beau ideal of the human character improved in each. The meritorious qualities of a Horn Child, a Tristram, or a Lancelot, are excelled by those of an Amadis de Gaul. Ariosto and Tasso soared far beyond the Minstrels, Wace, Chretien de Troyes, and Vasco Lobeira. More intellect and refinement were combined with the hero and the lover in the Oroondates and Grand Cyrus. Succeeding romancers have paid equal homage to the improving spirit of society. Even a Voltaire attempted to draw his picture of human excellence in the *Henriade*, though some original sin lowered him down to the *Pucelle*. It is the fault of the artist, not of his art, if his fictions be either unuseful or pernicious. Let us then not reprimand our ancestors for their attachment to these compositions, nor for producing them. Fictitious narratives have been highly useful, and may be more so. We all need tuition full as much as we dislike it. It may therefore be welcomed from every quarter, and particularly when it comes accompanied by harmless emotion and intellectual delight. Let us only urge our minstrels and fableurs to make their own ideal beauty as excellent as they can, before they embody it to our sight.

Of the attachment of our ancestors to romantic compositions, we have many evidences. When the noble Bruce, in his exile, wished to recreate his wearied companions, he read to them a romance. Several were transcribed for our sovereigns Henry III, Edward I, and others. When Chaucer is afflicted with sleeplessness, he takes a romance 'to rede and drive the night away.' Henry V. urged Lydgate to versify the Destruction of Troy, to animate the declining heroism of his nobility. And Occleve, in his zeal against Lollardy, advised Sir John Oldcastle to leave off studying 'Holy Writ,' and to read 'Lancelot de Lake,' 'Vegece,' or the 'Siege

of Troie or Thebes<sup>15</sup>.’ Almost all the romances we have, begin or end with stating, that they were made at the request, or for the amusement of the great; and they formed the principal part of the noble libraries. Of this latter fact, we have a curious specimen in the library of the earl of Warwick, which he gave to the abbey of Bordesley in Worcestershire<sup>16</sup>. Indeed, such a present

<sup>15</sup> See “Poems by Thomas Hoccleve,” printed by George Mason, London 1796, p. 12.

<sup>16</sup> We are indebted for this catalogue to the Rev. Mr. Todd, who has given it to the public in his “Illustrations of Gower and Chaucer,” from the Lambeth MSS.

“Sachez nous avoir baylé e en la garde le Abbé e le Covent de Bordesleye lessé à demorer à touzjours touz les *Romaunces* desouz només; ceo est assaveyr, Un Volum, qe est appelé Tresor—Un Volum, en le quel est le premer livre de Lancelot; E un Volum del Romaunce de Aygnes—Un Sauter de Romaunce—Un Volum des Evangelies, é de Vie des Seins—Un Volum, qe p’le des quatre principals Gestes de Charles e de dooun, é de Meyace, é de Girard de Viene, E de Emery de Nerbonne—Un Volum del Romaunce Emond de Ageland, e deu Roy Charles dooun de Nauntoile—E le Romaunce de Gwyoun de Nauntoyl—E un Volum del Romaunce Titus et Vespasien—E un Volum del Romaunce Josep ab Arimatnie, e deu Saint Grael—E un Volum, qe p’le coment Adam fust euieste hors de paradys, e le Genesisie—E un Volum, en le quel sont contenuz touns des Romaunces, ceo est assaveir, Vitas patrum au comencement; e pus un Counte de Anteypt; e la Vision Saint Pol; E pus les Vies des xii Seins; E le Romaunce de Willame de Loungespé; E Autorites des Seins humes; E le Mirour de Alme—Un Volum, en le quel sont contenuz la Vie Saint Pere é Saint Pol, e des autres liv.—E un Volum, qe est appelé l’Apocalips; e un livre de Phisik é de Surgie—Un Volum del Ro-

maunce de Gwy é de la Reygne tut entere-ment—Un Volum del Romaunce de Troies—Un Volum del Romaunce de Willame de Orenge e de Tebaud de Arabie—Un Volum del Romaunce de Amase e de Idoine—Un Volum del Romaunce Girard de Viene—Un Volum del Romaunce deu Brut, e del Roy Costentine—Un Volum de le enseigment. Aristotle enveiez au Roy Alisaundre—Un Volum de la Mort ly Roy Arthur, e de Mordret—Un Volum en le quel sont contenz les Enfaunces Nostre Seygneur, coment il fust mené, en Egipt; E la vie Saint Edw<sup>d</sup>; E la visioun Saint Pol; La Vengeaunce n’re Seygneur par Vespasian e Titus; E la Vie Saint Nicolas qe fust nez en Patras; E la Vie Saint Eustace; E la Vie Saint Cudlac; E la Passioun n’re Seygneur; E la Meditacioun Saint Bernard de n’re Dame Saint Marie; e del Passioun sour douz fiz Jesu Crist n’re Seign<sup>r</sup>; E la Vie Saint Eufrasie; E la Vie Saint Radegonde; E la Vie Saint Juliane—Un Volum del Romaunce d’Alisaundre ove peintures—Un petit rouge livre en le quel sont continuz mous diverses choses—Un Volum del Romaunce des Mareschaus e de Firebras e de Alisaundre.....Les queus livres nous grauntions pur nos heyr e pur nos assignes qil demorront en la dit Abbeye, &c. Escrites au Bordesleye le premer Jour de May le an du regn le Roy Edw<sup>d</sup> trentime quart.” Todd’s Illustr. pp. 161, 162. This is indeed a very curious specimen of a nobleman’s library of the fourteenth century; for observing and publishing which, Mr. Todd deserves the thanks of the students of our antiquities.



sent to a monastic congregation implies, that they were not unacceptable, nor the taste for them discreditable, even to the clergy. The permission given to the fellows and scholars of the colleges at Oxford, to read in the winter season round their hall-fires, after dinner or supper, ballads and other decorous recreations, poems, chronicles, and the wonders of this world<sup>17</sup>, may be fairly construed to include the tales and romances, with which all, from the king to the beggar, were reputably delighted.

In almost all our old romances, we may observe the endeavour of the writer to paint his favourites with every perfection which his own conceptions enabled him to give them. Thus, in our oldest English tale, ‘the Geste of Kyng Horn,’ we have him first portrayed in the highest personal beauty—

Feyrore child ne myhte be born.  
For reyn ne myhte by ryne,  
Ne sonne myhte shyne  
Feyrore child then he was.  
Bryht so ever eny glas :  
So whit so eny lylve flour;  
So rose red wes his colour.  
He wæs feyr and eke bold,  
Ant of fyftene wynter old  
Nis non his yliche  
In none kinges ryche<sup>18</sup>.

The writer next gives him one of the greatest merits of the day, by exhibiting him with undaunted valour; for though, as riding out with only two companions—

He fond by the stronde  
Aryved on is londe  
*Shipes fyftene*  
Of Sarazynes kene<sup>19</sup>,

He

<sup>17</sup> “Gracia recreationis in aula, in cantilenis et aliis solaciis honestis, moram facere condecens; et poemata, regnorum chronicas et mundi hujus mirabilia,” &c. See the

Statutes quoted by Mr. Warton, in his History of Poetry, vol. 1. pp. 92, 93.

<sup>18</sup> Ritson’s Metrical Romances, vol. 2. p. 91.

<sup>19</sup> Ib. p. 92.

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He attacks immediately, with his two friends, the crews of these fifteen ships—

Swerde hy gonne gripe  
And togedere smyte  
Hy smyten under shelde  
That hy somme yfelde <sup>20</sup>.

They are taken prisoners, and put into a ship, to drive by themselves at the mercy of the waves. On the second day, Horn displays the animation of his mind on descrying land:—

“ Y telle ou tydyng;   
Ich here foules singe,   
And se the grases springe.   
Blythe be ye alyve;   
Ur ship is come to ryve <sup>21</sup>.”

They land on the unknown shore, and Horn leaves the ship to the sea, with this address, by which the author takes occasion to make his hero shew his filial recollections:—

“ Now, ship! by the flode   
Have dayes gode.   
By the see brynke,   
No water the adrynke.   
Softe mote thou sterye,   
That water the ne derye.   
Yef thou comest to Sudenne,   
Gret hem that me kenne.   
Gret wel the gode   
Quene Godild, mi moder <sup>22</sup>.”

The king of the country receives them kindly; and with his aid the author proceeds to imbue his hero with the further accomplishments which were then thought most valuable—the art of hunting, music and poetry, carving and waiting at table. The king orders his steward to teach him these qualifications <sup>23</sup>. Horn learnt every thing he was taught; every body loved him, and, most

<sup>20</sup> Ritson's Metrical Rom. vol. 2. p. 93. <sup>21</sup> Ib. p. 96. <sup>22</sup> Ib. p. 97. <sup>23</sup> Ib. pp. 100, 101.



most of all, Rymenyld, the king's own daughter. Thus the prince is exhibited with all the excellencies that his minstrel poet valued. But the author makes him to act nobly, as well as learn. When the princess reveals her love to him, his sense of honour prompts him to tell her, that he is not worthy of her regard, because in her father's estimation he was but a servant and foundling, and that there could be no marriage affinity between a slave and a king<sup>24</sup>. Seeing her grief at this honourable recollection, he proposes to get dubbed a knight, that he may be relieved from his servile state, and be in a situation to acquire fame and honours. She acquiesces in his counsel. The king raises him to the coveted rank, and bids him be a good knight<sup>25</sup>.

Horn is now represented as feeling all the duties of his new dignity. He still gives honour the superiority to love; and reminds the princess, that before he can wed her, he must ride with his spear and prove his knighthood. He purposes to do acts of prowess, and, if he survives, he promises to claim her hand<sup>26</sup>. Thus the hero is made to conquer the temptations to self-gratification at that age when reason and virtue are found most irresolute. The reader may pursue this view of the romance; but enough has been said to shew that the bard was attempting to draw a pattern of knightly excellence.

In the romance of Iwain and Gawin, we see another poet attempting to elevate the manners of his contemporaries. He represents Arthur as a model of kingly merit:—

Of all knyhtes he bare the pryse.  
In world was non so war ne wise.  
Trew he was in alkyn thing;  
Als it byfel to swilk a kyng<sup>27</sup>.

So

<sup>24</sup> Ich am ybore thral;  
Thy fater lundlyng withal.  
Of kunde me ne selde,  
The to spouse welde.

<sup>25</sup> Ritson, vol. 2. p. 112.

Hit nere no fair weddyng  
Bituene a thral and a Kyng.

Ritson's Metrical Romances,  
vol. 2. p. 109.

<sup>26</sup> Ib. p. 113.

<sup>27</sup> Ib. vol. 1. p. 1.

So at the monarch's grand Whitsun festival, he describes the lords and ladies, 'knyghtes and damisels,' as conversing on the excellencies of other knights. He says they talked

- - - - - Curtaysly

Of dedes of armes and of venery:  
And of gude knyghtes that lyfed then;  
And how men might tham kyndeli ken,  
By doghtines of thaire gude dede,  
On ilka syde, wharesum thai yede <sup>28</sup>.

He ventures even to urge his contemporaries explicitly to greater virtue than they practised, by reproaching the present time with the merit of the past:—

Thai tald of more trowth tham bitwene,  
Than now omang men here es sene.  
For trowth and luf es al bylaft,  
Men uses now another craft;  
With worde men makes it trew and stabil  
Bot in their faith es noght bot fabil <sup>29</sup>.

But it would lead to a tedious length to instance the little details of merit which this and the other old romances make their characters display, and which must have beneficially impressed the readers whom they interested. The principle is universal, that every composer of fictitious narratives depicts his actors and tales with a meliorating spirit. He paints them to be admired, and he necessarily makes them as estimable as he can. The more perfect his taste, the more perfect will be his delineations.

<sup>28</sup> Ritson's Metrical Romances, vol. 1. p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> Ib. p. 2.



# HISTORY

## OF

# E N G L A N D.

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### C H A P. III.

POEMS OF JOHN GOWER.

WE now approach the Men who first gave our Poetry a permanent beauty and form. The authors hitherto noticed were but the heralds, that better things were possible, and excited the taste for their attainment. Yet, however uncouth their garb, or dull their endless rhymes and metre, Layamon, Gloucester, Brunne, Hampole, Barbour, the romancers, and Piers Plouhman, were still the messengers of a new power of intellect to the British nation, which their posterity were not slow to cultivate. A general activity and improvement of mind seem to have actuated Europe during the thirteenth century ; and the effects were peculiarly visible in Italy, and in her literature as much as in her civil transactions. The Provençal troubadours, who first nurtured the fancy of her people, gave way to a new race of native Italian poets, apparently beginning in Sicily, but soon pervading and animating all the peninsula. At the end of the thirteenth, and during the progress of the fourteenth century, Dante, Petrarch, and Boccacio, suddenly appeared with superior genius, with cultivated taste, and classical compositions. These men not only illuminated the countries where they were born or lived, but operated, by the diffusion

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diffusion of their works, to increase the intellectual light of nations more remote. It is with some regret that we read Petrarch complaining, that an English statesman, a minister of Edward III. neglected his letters<sup>1</sup>. But a statesman with a taste for literature or the arts is a confessed phenomenon. Mæcenas would lose his proverbial fame if it were not so ; and Petrarch's acquaintance with the busy world, ought to have diminished his surprise, if not his satire. More congenial minds however existed in England, who felt the merits of the Italian genius, and eagerly studied its effusions. Our Gower<sup>2</sup>, Chaucer<sup>3</sup>, and Lydgate<sup>4</sup>, discover in several passages

<sup>1</sup> As it has been usually stated that Petrarch was in familiar correspondence with this English chancellor in England, on the authority of the letter which I am going to cite, though it really disproves the fact, I will translate it at length : It is addressed to Thomæ Messanensi. He is speaking of the various opinions of the Isle of Thule :—  
“ I had much conversation on this subject with Richard, formerly the chancellor of the king of England ; a man of ardent mind, and not ignorant of letters. Having been born and educated in Britain, and from his youth unusually curious after subjects little known, he seemed to me to be peculiarly fit to elucidate questions of this sort. But whether he was ashamed to confess his ignorance to me, as many now are who are not aware how much credit it does their modesty (since no one is bound to know all things) to own frankly their ignorance of what they do not know ; or whether, which I will not suspect, that he envied me the knowledge of the subject ; or whether he expressed his real feelings ; he answered, that he would certainly satisfy me, but not till he returned to his books in his own country, of which no man had a more abundant supply. He was then, when I fell into his acquaintance, at the apostolical seat (at Avignon) negotiating the affairs of his master. It was at that juncture, when those first seeds of war were growing

between his sovereign and the king of France, which have since produced such a bloody harvest, and of which the sickles have not yet been laid aside, nor the barns closed. But after my promiser went away, whether he found nothing, or became distracted by the heavy duties of his episcopal office newly imposed, yet he *never* satisfied my wishes, *although often urged by my letters*, otherwise than *by an obstinate silence*. So Thule never became more known to me for my British friendship.” Petrarch, Epist. famil. l. 3 .p. 34. ed. Venice 1492.

<sup>2</sup> Gower mentions an anecdote of Dante in his 7th book, p. 222.

<sup>3</sup> Chaucer tells the famous story of Ugo-lino, from Dante, and calls him ‘ the grete poete of Itaille.’ Monkes Tale, p. 126. Chal. ed. He inserts a song, which appears to be a translation of one of Petrarch's sonnets, in his Troilus ; and Mr. Tyrrhwit and Mr. Warton have remarked, that Chaucer's Palenion and Arcite was taken from Boccacio's Theside. Mr. Tyrrhwit believes that the Troilus and Cressid was taken from Boccacio's Filostrato. Mr. Godwin repels this supposition ; Life Chauc. vol. 1. p. 270 ; but I think not conclusively.

<sup>4</sup> Lydgate thus mentions Petrarch :

But O ! alas ! the retorikes suete  
Of Petrak ffraunceys that so coude endite.  
MS. Harl. 629.



passages of their works that they were benefited from this source. CHAP.  
To them our attention must now be turned. III.

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Gower and Chaucer were contemporaries, and for some time friends, and notice each other in their works with affectionate commendation. But Gower was born<sup>5</sup> before Chaucer, and seems to have survived him. The oldest writers who mention both, usually place Gower first; and Fox, after mentioning Chaucer, says that Gower was a great deale his ancient<sup>6</sup>. That Gower was in established fame when Chaucer published the work that has been deemed one of his earliest, the *Troilus*, may be presumed from its dedicating expressions. The intimation of Leland, that he was descended from the Gowers of Stittenham in Yorkshire, seems to be confirmed by the deed dated at that place, on which his name is indorsed as a witness<sup>7</sup>. He lived to become old, blind, and infirm<sup>8</sup>. In 1400, he penned expressions which imply that he thought he was near death<sup>9</sup>, but he survived till

<sup>5</sup> The deed which Mr. Todd, in his Illustrations, remarks that Gower witnessed, is dated in 1346. If we suppose him to have then been 18, it will place his birth about 1328. And on this computation he would be 80 when he died. I am not inclined to place him earlier.

<sup>6</sup> See Mr. Todd's Illustrations, Introd. pp. xxvi—xxxii. John the Chaplain mentions Chaucer first. Todd, xxxi. But as this author finished his metrical translation in 1410, and Gower did not die till the latter part of 1408, it is probable that he wrote the passage on both while Gower was alive, and therefore naturally mentioned Chaucer first. The different tenses of the verbs he uses, seem to me to imply that the one was dead and the other living.

To Chawcer that *was* flour of rhetoric—  
And Gower that craftily *dooth* trete.

<sup>7</sup> Todd's Illust. pp. 91, 92. Very little is

known of Gower's life. Leland calls him, "*Ver equestris ordinis*," and adds, that he both studied and practised law. *De Scrip. Brit.* 414. That he was in London at the time of Wat Tyler's insurrection has been already mentioned. His being a lawyer will account for his flight and trepidation, mentioned before, pp. 202, 203.

<sup>8</sup> After mentioning of himself, that having written the *Vox Clamantis* and the *Chronica Tripartita*, to the second year of Henry iv. or 1400, he adds, "and now because in many ways depressed by the weight of old age and other infirmities I am unable to write chronicles any further," &c.—also, "It was the second year of king Henry that I cease to write, because I am blind." MS. Tib. A 4.

<sup>9</sup> "Having written on the vanities of the world, I am about to leave the world. In my last verse I write that I am dying. Let him that comes after me write more discreetly

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till 1408<sup>10</sup> His will proves that poverty was not among the evils that he was suffering.

His first poems were the fifty Sonnets in French, which frequently exhibit much softness and even elegance<sup>11</sup>. His *Vox Clamantis* and *Metrical Chronicle*, both in Latin, have been already noticed<sup>12</sup>. The poem which has ranked him among the fathers of English poetry is the *Confessio Amantis*; it contains nearly 35,000 lines. He wrote it by the desire of Richard II<sup>13</sup>. But it is not clear at what time he composed it, excepting that he began it after this king's accession, and had finished it before the sixteenth year of his reign<sup>14</sup>, or between 1377 and 1398.

The

creetly than I have done, for now my hand and pen are silencing. I can do nothing of any value now with my hands. The labour of prayers is all that I can bear. I pray then with my tears, living, but blind. O God! protect the future reigns which thou hast established, and give me to share thy holy light." MS. Cot. Lib. Tib. A 4.

<sup>10</sup> Mr. Todd has brought this fact to public notice by reprinting his Will, which Gough had inserted in his *Sepulchral Monuments*, but which had been overlooked, and by adding its probate. The Will is dated in 1408, and proved 24 October 1408, by his wife. See it in Todd, 87—90. It purports to have been made within the priory of St. 'Marie de Overes,' now St. Saviour's, in Southwark. It gives several legacies to the prior and convent; others to the hospitals of St. Thomas, in Southwark, 'St. Thome Elsingpitell, Bedlem extra Byschopus-gat, and St. Mary Spitell,' near Westminster. To his wife he leaves £.100. some plate, and the rents of the farms of *his manors* of Southwell in Nottinghamshire, and of Multon in Suffolk. Ib.

<sup>11</sup> Mr. Todd has printed, more correctly than before, five of these balades, the 30th, 34th, 36th, 43d and 48th, in his *Illustrations*,

pp. 102—108, from a MS. of the marquis of Stafford's, of which he says, "By an entry on the first leaf, in the hand-writing and under the signature of Thomas lord Fairfax, Cromwell's general, an antiquary, and a lover and collector of curious manuscripts, it appears that this book was presented by the poet Gower, about the year 1400, to Henry the Fourth; and that it was given by lord Fairfax to his friend and kinsman sir Thomas Gower, knight and baronet, in the year 1656." It appears also to "have been in the hands of king Henry the Seventh, while earl of Richmond, from the name Rychemond inserted in another of the blank leaves at the beginning, and explained by this note, 'Liber Henrici septimi, tunc comitis Richmond, propria manuscript.'" Todd, p. 96. Warton's *Hist. Poet.*

<sup>12</sup> See before, p. 214.

<sup>13</sup> See before, p. 255.

<sup>14</sup> From the printed lines of his Prologue it is inferred that he wrote it in the sixteenth year of Richard II. But the original Prologue did not contain these lines; and the substitution of those, which mention the date, for the others, imply that it was at least begun, if not finished, much earlier. It is most probable that so large a poem occupied



The merit of Gower stood high in the estimation of our ancestors. He has been characterized as wise, impressive, and almost sublime in his ethical character, but of no estimation as a poet. It is certain that the apostrophe of Chaucer, "O moral Gower!" breathes a volume of praise which language can scarcely exalt, and which few poets have deserved<sup>15</sup>. But Gower is not merely the moralist; he is also the genuine poet. Chaucer was his superior; but of all the authors who attempted narrative poetry in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Gower may claim the seat nearest to his friend. The English poetry that preceded Gower, was either the religious, the chronicle, or the romance, as already described, or the amatorial song, perhaps borrowed from the Troubadours. Our native language was still wild and rude. Though Brunne and Hampole had cleared away many weeds and scattered a few simple flowers, it as yet contained no work worthy, as Leland expresses it, of an elegant reader<sup>16</sup>. Gower aspired to make one in obedience to his sovereign's command, and for his sake<sup>17</sup>. He formed

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occupied a considerable portion of his life, and that it was written and made public, at least to his friends, at different periods. Hence Chaucer may have known it before he wrote his *Troilus*. That we must not take his later dates or dedications as conclusive proofs of the time of the composition of this work, we may reason from his *Sonnets*, which, though his first work, yet are addressed to Henry IV, by their Colophon, mentioned by Todd, p. 97.

<sup>15</sup> Chaucer says in his *Troilus*—

O moral Gower! this booke I direct  
To thee, and the philosophical Stroode,  
To vouchesafe, where nede is, to correcte  
Of your benignetyes and zeales good.  
Troilus, l. 1.

<sup>16</sup> Leland, who was, from his nearness to Gower's times, a better judge of the point than we are, says of Gower, "That he was of all, the first polisher of his paternal

tongue. For before his age the English language lay uncultivated, and almost entirely rude. Nor was there any one who had written any work in the vernacular tongue, worthy of an elegant reader. Therefore he thought it worth his while to apply a diligent culture, that thus the rude herbs being extirpated, the soft violet and the purple narcissus might grow instead of the thistle and thorns." Leland de Script. p. 415. Skelton, poet laureat at Oxford, about 1489, expresses a similar opinion:—"I saw Gower, that *first* garnished our Englysshe rude." Crowne of Laurell, p. 240.

<sup>17</sup> In our englysshe I thinke make  
A boke for Kynge Richardes sake.  
Gower's 1st Prol.

He hath this charge upon me leyde.  
Some newe thyng I shuld boke  
That he hymselfe it might loke.—Ib.

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the plan of writing a poem which he thought new, that should live to future ages<sup>18</sup>, and blend instruction with entertainment<sup>19</sup>; that should be wisdom to the wise, and pleasure to the gay<sup>20</sup>. This design, of uniting the minstrel with the philosopher, was highly beneficial to the British public in those days, when few wrote in English<sup>21</sup>, and when the national intellect had made but little progress in thinking morally on life, beyond the precincts of the cloister. Though sickness distressed him<sup>22</sup>, he pursued, and has accomplished the task which he proposed to himself, of reviewing the changing manners of the world<sup>23</sup>, and treating on its virtues and vices<sup>24</sup>. With many a pleasing tale, and with others dull to us but gratifying to our ancestors, he has interwoven a body of reflections on life, ethics, and knowledge, which English literature had not possessed before. He enlarged and disciplined the intellect and taste of his countrymen; and if his works have ceased to be either necessary or interesting, it is because they have powerfully assisted to create that superiority of mind, which, honouring its ancient teachers with verbal respect, neither resorts to

<sup>18</sup> For thy goodis, that we also—  
Do write of newe some mattere.  
Ensampled of the olde wise,  
So that it might be in suche a wise,  
Whan we be deade, and els where,  
Beleve to the worldes ere.

Gower, Prol. p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> Who that all of wisdom write  
It dulleth ofte a mans witte.  
To hym that shall it all daie rede.  
For thilke cause—  
I wyll go the middell wey  
And write a boke bytwene the twey.  
Ib.

<sup>20</sup> To make a boke after his herte—  
Whiche maie be wisdom to the wise,  
And plaie to hem that list to plaie.  
Ib.

<sup>21</sup> So Gower remarks—  
And for that few men endite  
In our Englysshe.—Prol. p. 7.

I should rather infer from this passage, that Chaucer had not written much at the time this sentence was penned. If he had attained any celebrity, Gower would have hardly claimed such a merit for writing in English.

<sup>22</sup> Though I sekenesse have upon honde  
And longe have had—  
Ib.

<sup>23</sup> I thynke for to touche also  
The worlde, whiche neweth every daie,  
So as I can; so as I maie.  
Ib.

<sup>24</sup> And in this wise I thynke to treate—  
Betwene the vertue and the vice.  
Ib. p. 8.



to them for pleasure, nor condescends to study their obsolete lessons<sup>25</sup>. CHAP.  
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The form into which he has chosen to arrange his thoughts and his stories was certainly peculiar. He goes out into the woods, "not for to synge with the birdes," but to muse despondingly on love; and the king and queen of love there appear to him. Cupid, 'with eyen wrothe,' sends through his heart 'a fyry dart.' But Venus is desirous to console him. She wishes, however, first to ascertain the merit of her votary, whether he be 'a faitour,' a deceiver or not; and she calls upon Genius, 'O Genius, mine owne clerke,' to come forth and examine him as his confessor. Their dialogue constitutes the poem.

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To us this plan for an ethical poem appears sufficiently whimsical. But in the mind of Gower it had a propriety and a consistency which we shall scarcely feel. He lived at the period in which the refined spirit of chivalric gallantry had attained its highest polish. Love was, in the estimation of the age, the perfection of human excellence, and the worthiest object of human life. Gower felt with his age, but tried to make that feeling to be accompanied by every virtue and knowledge, and freed from every vice. To use his own words—

Suche love is goodly for to have;  
Suche love maie the body save;  
Suche love maie the sowle amende;  
The Highe God suche love us sende

Forthwith;

<sup>25</sup> Besides Leland, who says that Gower's works were in his time read 'studiously by the learned,' p. 415, we have two writers in the sixteenth century, who express their sense of this old poet's merit and use. One, Caxton, in his dedication of the *Confessio* to Henry VIII, says of it—"It is plentifully stuffed and furnished with manifolde eloquent reasons, sharpe and quicke argumentes, and examples of great auctoritee, perswadynge unto vertue, not onely taken out of the poetes, oratours, historie writers and philo-

sophers, but also out of the Holy Scripture." The other is the author of the *Dialogue* printed 1573: "And nere them satte old moral Goore with pleasaunte penne inhande, commendying honeste love without luste, and pleasure without pride, holinesse in the cleargie without hypocrisie, no tyrannie in rulers, no falshode in lawiers, no usurie in marchautes, no rebellion in the commons, and unittie among kyngdoms." Todd's *Introduct.* p. xxix.

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Forthwith; the remenaunt of grace.  
So that above in thilke place,  
Where resteth love and all pees,  
Our joye maie be endless <sup>26</sup>.

The lover, therefore, in the mind of Gower, was to be the Sir Charles Grandison of human life; that image of ideal excellence which it is the lot of genius and philanthropy so frequently to contemplate, so rarely to attain. Therefore, just as Cicero required his perfect orator to possess all human knowledge, so Gower taught his lover to attain whatever was valuable both in virtue and intellect. To ascertain whether the lover he personates was of this description, whether he loved “in good manere <sup>27</sup>,” and to assist him in his moral and mental progression, the deputed priest of Venus pursues his examination. He begins with the errors of the two chief senses, the sight and the hearing; and he questions him, whether he has offended with them. He proceeds to the vices, beginning with hypocrisy, and asks him—

‘If thou arte of his companie;  
Tell forth my sonne and shrive thee cleane.’—p. 21.

His plan usually is for Genius to describe the vice or the virtue which he means to illustrate; to tell some interesting tale about it; to inquire if his hearer has practised it, and to instruct him, by some moral or prudential admonition, to avoid the evil and pursue the good. He requires him to add knowledge to his virtue; and therefore treats on chemistry, and the other studies and sciences then pursued.

The poem of Gower has been more criticised than read, and from its neglect has, unfortunately for his fame, been much underrated. It has been judged by the form into which he has arranged it,

<sup>26</sup> Gower's Confess. l. 8. p. 274. Chalmers' ed.

<sup>27</sup> Lo thus, my sonne! might thou lere  
What is to love in good manere,  
And what to love in other wise.—Ib. p. 265.



it, rather than by its actual contents. It is not fair to describe it as an absurd dialogue between a lover and a priest of Venus. Its proper character is a didactic and ethical poem, built on that little allegory, and illustrated by appropriate tales. Some of these tales are very interesting; as his Paulina<sup>28</sup>, his Florent<sup>29</sup>, his Kyng of Lumbardie<sup>30</sup>, his Kyng of Hungarie<sup>31</sup>, his King that 'was whilom yong and wise<sup>32</sup>;' his tales of Constance, Canace, and Pygmalion<sup>33</sup>, his Crassus, and his Nectanebus<sup>34</sup>. Many of his stories are unfortunately taken from that abyss of dulness, ancient mythology, and therefore have that petrifying effect upon his powers which every modern poet has experienced, who has taken his subject from the themes of his school-exercises.

That Gower had the talent of a poet in no common degree, in a rude time, when genuine poesy had yet scarcely even appeared in the English language, he shews by his numerous effusions on his leading subject, love. His soul seems to have been completely imbued with this passion in all its romantic feeling, and he expatiates upon it with a never-wearied enthusiasm. His feelings, on dancing with his mistress, are very livelyly pourtrayed—

For than I dare well undertake  
That whan hir list on nightes wake  
In chambre as to carole and daunce,  
Methinke I maie me more avance  
If I may gone upon hir honde,  
Then if I wyne a kynges londe.  
For whan I maie hir honde beclip  
With suche gladnes I daunce and skip,  
Methinketh I touche not the floore.  
The ro whiche renneth on the moore  
Is than nought so light as I.

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<sup>28</sup> Gower's Confess. p. 23.

<sup>29</sup> Ib. p. 18.

<sup>30</sup> Ib. p. 26.

<sup>31</sup> Ib. p. 32.

<sup>32</sup> Ib. p. 41.

<sup>33</sup> Ib. pp. 49. 73. 97.

<sup>34</sup> Ib. pp. 139. 197. His account of Medea and Jason, Book 5. is far superior to any of the Norman Trouveurs.

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He continues interestingly—

So mowe ye witten all for thy,  
 That for the tyme, slepe I hate :  
 And whan it falleth other gate  
 So that hir liketh not to daunce,  
 But on the dyes to cast a chaunce,  
 Or aske of love some demaunde,  
 Or els that hir list commaunde  
 To rede and here of Troilus<sup>34</sup> ;  
 Right as she wolde so, or thus  
 I am all redie to consent.  
 And if so is that I maie hent  
 Somtyme amonge a good leyser ;  
 So as I dare, of my desire  
 I telle a part : But whan I praie,  
 Anone she biddeth me go my weye ;  
 And scithe ‘ It is ferre in the night’—  
 And I swere “ It is even light.”  
 But as it falleth at laste  
 There may no worldes joye last—  
 How piteousliche on hir I looke  
 Whan that I shall my leve take  
 Hir ought of mercy for to slake<sup>35</sup>.

His description of parting with his mistress is natural, and described with true poetry :—

And than I bidde “ God hir see ”  
 And so down knelende on my knee  
 I take leve ; and if I shall,  
 I kisse hir and go forth withall.  
 And other while if that I dore  
 Ere I come fully at the dore  
 I tourne ayene and feigne a thyng,  
 As though I had lost a rynge,  
 Or somewhat els, for I wolde  
 Kisse her eftsoone if I shulde.  
 But selden is that I so spede.  
 And whan I see that I mote nede  
 Depart—I depart—and than  
 With all my herte I curse and banne,  
 That ever slepe was made for eye<sup>36</sup>.

Gower

<sup>34</sup> This may be Chaucer's.<sup>35</sup> Gower's Confess. Book 4. p. 116.<sup>36</sup> Ib.



Gower delights to indulge in these effusions. On another occasion, he says--

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In every place, in every stede,  
What so my lady hath me bede,  
With all myn herte obedient,  
I have therto been diligent.  
And if so is that she bid nought,  
What thyng that than into my thought  
Cometh first—if that I maie suffice  
I bowe and proffer my service,  
Somtime in chamber, somtyme in hall,  
Right so as I see the tymes fall.  
And whan she goth to here masse—  
In aunter if I maie hir lede  
Unto the chapell and againe,  
Than is not all my wey in vayne.  
Somdele I maie the better fare.  
Whan I, that maie not fele hir bare,  
May lede hir clothed in myn arme.  
But afterwarde it doth me harme,  
Of pure imaginacion.  
For than this collacion,  
I make unto my selven ofte;  
And say—"O Lorde how she is softe;  
How she is rounde; how she is small;  
Now wold God I had hir all<sup>37</sup>."

Nothing can more vividly display the feelings of love in all its romantic gallantry, than these lines:—

What thyng she byt me don, I do.  
And where she byt me gon, I go.  
And whan hir list to clepe, I come—  
I serve, I bowe, I loke, I lowte  
Myn eie foloweth hir aboute;  
What so she woll, so woll I;  
Whan she woll sit, I knele by:

And

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<sup>37</sup> Gower's Confess. Book 4. p. 103.

And whan she stont than woll I stonde:  
And whan she taketh hir werke on honde,  
Of wevyng or of embroudrie,  
Than can I not but muse and prie  
Upon hir fingers longe and smale <sup>38</sup>.

His pictures breathe all the features of real life:—

And if it fall as for a tyme,  
Hir liketh nought abide by me,  
But busien hir on other thynges;  
Than make I other tarienges  
To drive forth the longe daie.  
For me is loth departe awaie.  
And than I am so symple of porte,  
That for to feigne some disporte  
I play with hir littell hounde,  
Nowe on the bed, now on the grounde.  
Nowe with the birdes in the cage.  
For there is none so litell page  
Ne yet so symple a chamberere  
That I ne make hem all chere <sup>39</sup>.

Another picture may be added—

And if hir liste to riden oute  
On pilgremage, or other stede,  
I come, though I be not bede  
And take hir in myne arm alofte  
And set hir in hir sadle softe,  
And so forth lede hir by the bridell,  
For that I wolde not ben ydell.  
And if hir list to ride in chare,  
And that I maie therof beware,  
Anone I shape me to ride  
Right even by the chares side,  
And as I maie I speke amonge,  
And other while I synge a songe <sup>40</sup>.

There are many pleasing passages of this sort, which compel us to say that no English poet seems so truly to have felt, and so forcibly

<sup>38</sup> Gower's Confess. Book 4. p. 103.

<sup>39</sup> Ib.

<sup>40</sup> Ib. p. 104.



forcibly to have described, the passion of love in its true sentiment and chivalry, as our neglected Gower. CHAP.  
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Sometimes he has a little touch of the Donne and Cowley witticisms. Thus, Genius having told the story of Medusa, asks him if he has ever misused his eyes? He answers— POEMS  
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Myn hert is growen into stone  
So that my lady thereupon  
Hathe suche a printe of love grave  
That I can nought my selfe save <sup>41</sup>.

But these false fancies are rare. His stories are usually told in a plain and even style, but with much nature and unaffected feeling. He has not indeed the polished selection of thought which we now require; he does not usually in his descriptions seize upon the incident or the little features, which so often in Chaucer convey the narration to the heart; but he always gives the natural though unadorned flow of a mind highly cultivated for his day, and sometimes he is interesting. Thus, in the shocking story of the princess Canace, who was led by unguarded familiarities into a great crime, and was delivered of a child. Her companion in the guilt fled, and her enraged father vowed to punish her vindictively:—

Betwene the wave of wode and wroth,  
Into his daughters chambre he gothe,  
And sie the childe that late was bore;  
Wherof he hath his othe swore,  
That she it shall full sore abie.  
And she beganne mercy to crie  
Upon hir bare knees, and praide,  
And to hir father thus she saide—

“ Have mercy! Father!—Thynke I am  
Thy childe—and of thy bloud I cam.  
That I misdeed, youth it made;  
And in the floudde bad me wade.

Where

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<sup>41</sup> Gower's Confess. Book 4. p. 21.

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Where that I saw no perill tho.  
But nowe it is befall so,  
Mercy—my father ! do no wreeche !”  
And with that worde she loste speche ;  
And fell downe swouned at his fote <sup>42</sup>.

Her father will not forgive her, and sends her a sword, to destroy herself with it. She promises to obey him; and sits down to write her last letter to her seducer, whom she still loves :—

O thou my sorrow and my gladness!  
O thou my hele and my sickness!  
O thou my weale ; O thou my wo !  
O thou my frende ! O thou my fo !  
O thou my love ! O thou my hate !  
For thee mote I be dead algate  
Thilke ende maie I not asterte ;  
And yet with all myn holle herte,  
While that there lasteth me any breath  
I woll thee love unto my death.  
But of one thyng I shall the preie  
If that my litell sonne deie,  
Let him be buried in my grave  
Beside me - - - - -  
In my right honde my penne I holde,  
And in my lefte my swerde kepe ;  
*And in my barme there lieth to wepe*  
*Thy chylde and myn, which sobbeth fast.*  
Nówe am I come unto my last.  
Farewell—For I shall soone die—  
And thinke how I thy love abie <sup>43</sup>.

Many touches of nature occur in his tales. Thus in his Constance : In consequence of a false accusation and forged orders, she was put into a ship with her son, and left to the mercy of the waves. The poet thus describes it :—

Upon the sea thei have hir brought :  
But she the cause wist nought.

And

<sup>42</sup> Gower's Confess. Book 3. p. 74.

<sup>43</sup> Ib.



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And thus upon the floode they wonne,  
 The lady with hir yonge sonne.  
 And then hir handes to the heven  
 She straught; and with a milde steven,  
 Knelend upon hir bare knee  
 She saide, 'O high majostee  
 Whiche seest the point of every trouth,  
 Take of thy woful woman routh;  
 And of this childe which I shall kepe.'  
 And with that worde she gan to wepe,  
 Swouned as deade and there she laie:  
 But he whiche all thynges maie,  
 Comforteth hir, and at laste  
 She loketh and hir eyen caste  
 Upon hir childe and saide this.

'Of me no maner charge it is  
 What sorowe I suffer, but of thee  
 Methinketh it is great pitee.  
 For if I sterve thou must deie.  
 So mote I nedes by that weie  
 For motherheed and for tenderness  
 With all my hole besynes,  
 Ordeine me for thilke office  
 As she whiche shall be thy norice.'

Thus was she strenghtned for to stonde  
 And tho she took her child in honde,  
 And gave it souke; and ever amonge  
 She wepte; and otherwhile songe  
 To roeke with hir childe aslepe<sup>44</sup>.

But with many passages like these, Gower has a great deal that is dull and unreadable now. Criticism cannot impart feeling and genius, but it can teach judgment. We seldom pardon in our own times the weeds for the flowers of a composition; and our ancient poets, who had not learnt to separate them, suffer from the refinement of our taste, the extent of our acquisitions, and the correctness of our discrimination. Gower, to our ancestors, was like an orchard

<sup>44</sup> Gower's Confess. Book 2. p. 53.

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orchard in a desert. He was therefore highly popular in his own days, and long celebrated afterwards ; till the widely diffused cultivation of our literature diminished his intrinsic value, and multiplied his rivals.

The account of Gower's poems may be closed with a few general remarks. Writers compose with minds full of those ideas and feelings of the age, which their individual nature has imbibed. These, after circulating a while in themselves, gathering new associations, and receiving new tinctures from their peculiar experience and reflections, are issued from them to act in this improved or augmented state on the ideas and feelings of others. Scholastic reasoning, love, religion, war, and romance reading, were the prevailing employments of life in Gower's youth. He turned from war, but he pursued the rest, and, with his mind stored with all that they taught, he sat down to compose a work, which, dropping the useless parts of what he had acquired, should give the world their valuable tuition with more profitable combinations. Thus the improvement which he had derived from the schoolmen and the religious, he displayed in the new and important form of moral reasoning, completely separated from the theology and superstitions of his day. He has thus the great merit of beginning ethical reasoning and ethical poetry in England, distinct from the scholastic metaphysician on the one hand, and from the monk and mass-priest on the other. He was so anxious to keep his work from the machinery of the cloister, that he builds his fable on Venus, Cupid, and Genius, as Dante, apparently aiming at the same thing as far as he dared, made Virgil his guide even through the Inferno and the Purgatorio. These apparent anomalies of invention may be referred to a desire of escaping from the trammels of the legend, and of instructing mankind without too much offending the prejudices of the age. Hence Gower makes Genius a *priest* of Venus, uttering discourses very unlike what priests then made,



made, but thereby obliquely teaching them what they ought to enforce. The habits of the age compelled or induced Gower to make his moral preceptor a priest—however dissimilar his Clerke of Venus was to the Roman ecclesiastic. There was both satire and instruction in this incongruous fable.

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Thus Gower's book took morality out of the hands of the monk, the friar, and the papal hierarchy—separated it from vulgar superstitions and sacerdotal machinery—and brought it down to the usual habits, and associated it with the general reasonings and intellect of the world. He presented ethics as a distinct branch of mental cultivation by laymen, and he divided it for ever from the legends of the church. Brunne had begun this, but could not accomplish the emancipation. His information was not large enough—nor were his talents adequate to the task. But Gower's mind had embraced the whole range of thought and study in that day. He had identified with his genius all the tales of the romances, as well as the knowledge of the academy; and he, and perhaps he only, could then combine so much ethical reasoning, so many interesting tales, such a power of rhyming, and such ability of narration. We must all feel, that in illustrating the use and effects of the virtues and vices of mankind by pleasing tales of life and fancy, instead of monstrous and enslaving legends, he contributed more to the improvement of society than any writer in England that had preceded him. He put English poetry into a better path than it had then visited; he gave it more imagery, feeling, dialogue, sentiment, and natural incident, than it had been connected with, until he wrote. He must therefore be allowed an honourable rank among the intellectual benefactors of his country, whether his actual writings be perused or forgotten<sup>45</sup>.

<sup>45</sup> As few will now read Gower's long Poem, it may not be unacceptable to add a concise ANALYSIS of it.

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## ANALYSIS OF GOWER'S CONFESSIO AMANTIS.

GENIUS says, he will not only talk of love, 'but of other things, that touchen to the cause of vice;' that he will shew him all the vices one by one, that he may 'thereof take evidence to rule with his conscience.' He will therefore tell him of the Vices in order, and then shew the proprieties of Love.

Genius begins his tuition with stating, that the five 'Wyttēs,' or senses, are properly the gates through which all things come to the mind. That the Eye is the principal: Hence his first caution is to take care of the eye. He tells the story of Actæon, to prove to him 'What it is, a man to caste his eie amis.' And after adding another of Medusa, to advise him not to misuse his Sight, he proceeds to the Hearing. He illustrates the evils that may occur from this sense, by tales of a Serpent and the Syrens; and then proceeds to the Vices, on each of which he questions him how far he has committed them. He begins with Pride. Of this he distinguishes five species: The first, Hypocrisy: he inserts here an interesting tale of Paulina, p. 23, and the story of Sinon and the Trojan horse. To the second branch, 'Inobedience,' he adds the pleasing tale of Florent, p. 28. On Presumption, he tells the story of Capaneus, p. 32; another of the king of Hungary, which strongly fixes the attention, p. 33; and a third of Narcissus, which is ably narrated, p. 35. He delineates Avauntance, or boasting, with the striking tale of Alboin the Lombard, p. 36. On the fifth division of pride, Vain-glory, he describes with good effect the story of Nebuchadnezzar, p. 39; and another, of a king and a knight, which contains many good passages, p. 41.

His Second Book begins with Envy. On its first sort, Pain at others joy, he describes forcibly his feelings, on another approaching the lady he loves, p. 44, and the tale of Acis and Galatea. He expatiates on the second

sort, Joy at others grief, with the story of the Envious Man, p. 47. He illustrates the head of Detraction with similar effusions of sentiment, and the tale of Constance—and another on Demetrius, 49—57. On Dissimulation he also gives his feelings, and the tale of Dejanira, p. 61. To the topic of Supplantation, he adds an incident of Agamemnon's reign; and the story of a Soldan; and another, stating how pope Celestine was deluded into a resignation of the papacy, 67; and a fourth, on Constantine the Great, which is dramatically narrated, p. 69.

His Third Book opens with Ire or Anger. Its first head, Melancholy, has the pathetic tale of Canace, p. 73. On Strife, he expresses some pleasing thoughts, with an anecdote of Socrates, 77; and another on Coronas. On Hate, he adds the tale of Palamedes, p. 80. He versifies some valuable sentiments on Impetuosity and Homicide, with the incident of Diogenes and Alexander, and the well-told adventures of Piramus and Thesbe, p. 83. After other sentiments, p. 84, he narrates the stories of Daphne, p. 85; of Nestor, p. 86; and of Orestes, p. 87. He paints ably the nature and evils of Wars, p. 90; and gives a very fine tale of Alexander and the Robber, p. 91; of which bishop Lowth's thought, 'One murder makes a villain, millions a hero,' may be called the moral, and from which the comparison between Alexander and Bagshot the highwayman, in the "Adventurer," may have been borrowed. He describes Alexander's death with some excellent remarks, pp. 91, 92; and subjoins a tale of Achilles and Telephus, p. 93.

The Fourth Book begins with Sloth, which he distinguishes into several branches. Procrastination has three stories—on Dido, p. 95; Penelope, *ib.*; and the Ten Virgins, p. 96. On Pusillanimity, we have the story of Pygmalion and the Image very interestingly told,



told, p. 97; and other on Ligdus, p. 38. To Forgetfulness is a tale of Demophon, p. 100; and to Negligence the stories of Phaëton and Dædalus, p. 102. Idleness has some impressive sentiment, and several tales—the interesting Princess of Armenia, p. 104; Jephtha, p. 106; Telemachus, p. 108; Protesilaus, p. 109; Saul, *ib.*; the Centaur, p. 110; Hercules and Achelous, which has a good description of the latter's changes of figure, p. 110; Penthesilea and Æneas, p. 111. Some valuable thoughts are here introduced on Gentility and Riches, p. 111; and also on the Idle, p. 113. This topic leads him to enumerate the inventors of the Arts, and to expatiate on the art of Alchemy, p. 113; and on Rhetoric, p. 114. His topic of Somnolence occasions the effusion of some pleasing thoughts, p. 116; and the interesting story of Ceyx, p. 117; and another on Cephalus, which is well told, p. 119; and one on Io, p. 120. To Sorrow, the tale of Iphis, which is worth reading, is applied, p. 122.

His Fifth Book commences with Avarice. After some sensible remarks, occurs the story of Midas, which is very well told, p. 125. Good observations on Gold is followed by the sufferings of Tantalus, p. 126. On Jealousy, he expresses some striking sentiment, p. 127; and the affair of Mars and Venus, p. 128. He takes occasion to dissert on the Idolatry of the Ancients, p. 129; and to describe their Deities, 130—136. To this dull part he annexes a contrast of Christianity, p. 136; and an abuse of Lollardy, 137. On Covetousness, he narrates the tales of Crassus, 139; of a King, p. 140; and of the emperor Frederic, p. 141; some interesting sentiment, p. 142; and a tale of the Steward of Apulia, which is worth perusal, p. 144. Under the head of Perjury, he tells the story of Thetis, p. 145; and the long one of Medea, which contains some impressive descriptions and dialogue, p. 148. That of Æson's renovation follows, p. 153, which is also worthy of notice; and that of Athamas, p. 155.

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Usury has the Echo, p. 158, and Babio, p. 159. Ingratitude has a tale of Adrian, which attracts the attention, p. 160; and one of Theseus and Ariadne, p. 162. Rapine has the well-told story of Tereus, p. 165; and Robbery has Pallas and Lichæon, p. 170. An encomium on Virginity, p. 171, is attended by a tale, 172. Thoughts on Stealth are illustrated by tales of Orchamus and Iole, 174, 175. Sacrilege, by those of Lucius, 177; and of Paris, p. 180; with many good remarks, p. 178. The topic of Prodigality closes this book.

Gule, or Gluttony, opens the Sixth Book, with some well-reasoned verses, 184; and the stories of Jupiter's two baskets, p. 186; of Bacchus, 187; of Perithous, *ib.*; and of Galba, p. 188. The head of Delicacies has the parable of Lazarus, 189; and some pleasing sentiments on the Female world, 191; a short account of Nero, p. 192; and some remarks on Love, 193. His reasoning on Magic has the tale of Circe, p. 194; a romantic story of Ulysses, well told, p. 195; another long one of Nectanebus, which has several passages that will be read with pleasure, 197—201; and one of Zoroaster, p. 202.

The Poet having heard that Alexander was taught by Aristotle, "his heart sore longeth to know" what he learnt, p. 202; and in the Seventh Book, Genius declares, that he will rehearse to him 'The Schole of Aristotle, and cke the fare of Alisander how he was taught,' *ib.* He now proceeds to lecture on Philosophy: his topics are, Theorica; Physike, p. 203; Mathematics and the Elements, 204; Fire, 205; the Complexions, 206; Geography, 207; Astronomy, 208; Astrology, 210; Rhetoric, Logic, and Ethics, 216; Economics and Politics, 217. To Kings he enforces the duty of truth, with stories of Darius, 218, and of Zerubbabel, Apame, and Admetus. He also admonishes on Largesse, 219; with a tale on a Roman Knight. His head of Flattery has three stories: Diogenes, p. 221; Roman Emperors, 222; and Ahab, 224. The topic of

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Justice is illustrated by the story of Fabricius, p. 226; a Roman Prætor, *ib.*; Cambyses, 227; and Lycurgus, *ib.* On Pity, we have the tale of a Jew, 229; Codrus, 230; several minor ones, and the history of Gideon, p. 234. Further advice to Kings occurs, p. 236; with several small narrations. The incidents of Tarquin and Appius follow, pp. 244 & 246.

The Eighth Book exhibits a prosaic Sketch of Scripture History, 249; remarks on Incest, and a tale of Antiochus; with a very long one on Appolinus prince of Tyre, tedious as a whole, but with some better passages, 252—265.

A Conclusion of some length is most remarkable for the commemoration of Chaucer, which he puts into the mouth of Venus, p. 272:—

And grete well Chaucer, whan ye mete  
As my diciple and my poete;

For in the flowres of his youth,  
In sondrie wise, as he well couth,  
Of ditees and of songes glade,  
The whiche he for my sake made,  
The londe fulfilled is oner all.  
Wherof to hym in speciall,  
Above all other I am most holde,  
For thy, nowe in his daies olde,  
Thou shalt hym tell this message,  
That he vpon his latter age,  
To sette an ende of all his worke  
As he whiche is myn owne clerke,  
Do make his testament of loue  
As thou hast done thy shrifte above.  
So that my courte it maie recorde.

Book 8.

It is not clear from this passage, whether Chaucer was writing his Testament of Love, or had written it; but the words “vpon his latter age” imply that it was written in the old age of Chaucer.



# HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

## CHAP. IV.

### LIFE AND POEMS OF CHAUCER.

THE life of Chaucer has been written principally upon suppositions, and therefore as it usually appears is full of uncertainty. The exact times of his birth and death are unknown. It is intended in the present sketch to avoid the illusive ground of conjecture, to select the facts that are authenticated by subsisting records, and to refer the reader for the suppositions to our poet's biographers.

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In 1386, he stated himself, on his legal examination as a witness, to be of the age of forty years and upwards<sup>1</sup>. If Chaucer had then been, as is commonly supposed, fifty-eight<sup>2</sup>, it would have been a violation of truth for him to have conveyed an idea that he was but forty and upwards. The examination is in writing, and the whole

<sup>1</sup> This evidence was given on the 12th October, in the 10th year of Richard II. in an heraldic question about arms, depending in the Court Military between Sir Richard le Scrope and Sir Robert Grosvenor. See the Record in the Appendix to Mr. Godwin's Chaucer, vol. 1. p. 479.

Chaucer is 1328. The Record states that he had borne arms 27 years. It is far more likely that he had taken up arms at the usual age of 16 or 18, than at 31. I am sensible that the time preferred in the text, as the era of his birth, dislocates the received chronology of his works, but it will not be found inconsistent with any of them.

<sup>2</sup> The usual date assigned to the birth of

whole sworn to. This was a further reason with him for greater accuracy. To the usual question on such occasions, as to the age of the witness, we cannot doubt that Chaucer's answer was meant to be accurate. If, as sometimes happens, the witness is not certain as to the exact year of his birth, a round number nearest to it is that which is usually recollected and inserted. We may therefore from this document consider Chaucer to have been but a few years more than forty in 1386. Allowing five or six years for the addition, this would place his birth about 1340, a date that is most congruous with the authentic facts of his life and works.

Chaucer was one of the few poets who have experienced that successful career in life, which, in the dreams of youthful fancy, all the wooers of the Muse so fondly hope to attain. In 1367, he had a grant of twenty marcs a year from Edw. III. and is called in that "*Valettus noster*<sup>3</sup>." The age of twenty-seven suits this appellation better than forty. In 1370, he was employed on the king's business in foreign parts<sup>4</sup>; and two years afterwards, was sent on a special embassy with two others to the Doge of Genoa<sup>5</sup>. With these appointments, the age of thirty and thirty-two is sufficiently compatible. In 1374, the king granted him a pitcher of wine a day<sup>6</sup>, and also the office of comptroller of the customs, and subsidy of wool, leather, and woollen skins, at the port of London<sup>7</sup>. In the following year he obtained the wardship of a young heir, from which he received a pecuniary benefit<sup>8</sup>.

In

<sup>3</sup> The Appendixes to Mr. Godwin's Life of Chaucer, contain all the public documents concerning it. This grant is in vol. 2. p. 618.

<sup>4</sup> The protection, or passport, says, "*Galfridus Chaucer, qui in obsequium nostrum ad partes transmarinas de precepto nostro profecturus est.*" Godwin, App. p. 620.

<sup>5</sup> Ib. p. 620. In this he is called "*Scutiferi nostri.*"

<sup>6</sup> Ib. p. 621. He is named here, "*Armigero nostro.*"

<sup>7</sup> Ib. p. 622. This certainly states, that Chaucer should write with his own hand his rolls, and should execute his office "*in propria persona sua,*" and not by substitute. But we may presume this to be the usual official rule.

<sup>8</sup> Ib. p. 623.—The ward paid to Chaucer, for the guardianship and marriage, £.104. ib. p. 627.



In 1376, the king presented him with a gift of £. 71. 4s. 6d. a custom-house forfeiture<sup>9</sup>. In the next year, he appears to have been employed again on the king's secret service abroad<sup>10</sup>. These were the liberalities which he received from Edward III.

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Some time after 1370, and before 1381, he married a lady who had been one of the damsels of queen Philippa, and who for that service had the grant of an annuity of ten pounds a year<sup>11</sup>. Richard II. in the fourth year of his reign, confirmed his grandfather's annuities to both Chaucer and his wife, and added another of twenty marcs in lieu of the pitcher of wine<sup>12</sup>. In 1382, Richard made him comptroller of the small customs of the port of London, at the same time allowing him to execute it by deputy<sup>13</sup>. In 1384, the king gave him a leave of absence on his own concerns for a month, on condition of leaving a sufficient deputy in his first comptrollership<sup>14</sup>. Three months afterwards, he granted him a written permission to execute this office by deputy, as long as he should hold it<sup>15</sup>. In 1388, Chaucer surrendered up the two grants

<sup>9</sup> The owner had taken some wool from London to Durdraught, without paying custom or obtaining a licence. *Ib.* p. 624.

<sup>10</sup> "In quibusdam secretis negotiis regis," *ib.* p. 624. Froissart mentions, that about this time a secret treaty was made between Edward and the king of France; that the marriage of Richard with a French princess was discussed; and that "Geoffrey Caucher" was one of the envoys sent by Edward. This has been applied to Chaucer. *Froiss.* vol. i. c. 325.

<sup>11</sup> I infer these dates from these facts. Chaucer's treatise on the Astrolabe contains the date of an observation in 1391, and mentions his son Lewis as ten years old. Lewis was born, and of course his father was married, before 1381. The documents printed from Rymer, in Godwin's Appendix, p. 629, states Chaucer's wife Philippa to have been

one of the "domicellorum" of queen Philippa, and to have been allowed for her "good service" an annuity of ten marcs. The grants to the domicellæ of the queen are dated 1370, *ib.* p. 619; and among these is one to "Philippa Pycard," who, from being called by her maidenname, must have been then unmarried. These three authorities therefore, compared together, place Chaucer's marriage between 1370 and 1381; the date of his birth, inserted in the text, makes his age in these years to be between 30 and 41. On the common date of his birth he would have married between 42 and 53, which is less likely.

<sup>12</sup> *Godw. App.* pp. 628, 629.

<sup>13</sup> *Ib.* 629.

<sup>14</sup> *Ib.* 630, "pro quibusdam urgentibus negotiis ipsum tangentibus." Dated 25 Nov. 1384.

<sup>15</sup> *Ib.* 631, dated 17 Feb. In December 1386, there appear grants of similar comptrollerships

grants of annuity, and, at his request, an annuity to their amount was given to one John Scalby, for life<sup>16</sup>. In the next year, Chaucer was appointed clerk of the royal works at various places<sup>17</sup>; and in 1390, was directed to cause the collegiate chapel at Windsor to be repaired<sup>18</sup>.

Four years afterwards, Richard settled on him again an annuity of twenty pounds a year<sup>19</sup>. In 1398, a curious and important document appears: It recites, that the king had ordered Chaucer to transact and expedite for him several arduous and urgent affairs, as well in his absence as in his presence, in various parts within the kingdom of England; that Chaucer was afraid, that while thus pursuing the king's business, he should be molested or prosecuted by his rivals, and by many complaints and suits, and had therefore requested the king to aid him in this respect: Richard then, for Chaucer's security, takes him under his special protection; and directs that he shall be free from all arrest, injury, violence, or impediment, for two years<sup>20</sup>. Five months afterwards, the king granted him a pipe of wine annually<sup>21</sup>. The next year Richard was deposed.

It was in August that the reign of Richard ceased. In the following October, the new sovereign, Henry, confirmed Richard's donation

trollerships to two other persons. I am not satisfied that these were Chaucer's, and that they imply his dismissal, because this leave to appoint a deputy, states that there were other controllers of these same customs then in office: "*Absque impedimento collectorum customarum et subsidiorum nostrorum predictorum in portu predicto pro tempore existentium*." p. 631.

<sup>16</sup> Godw. App. p. 632.

<sup>17</sup> "At our palace at Westminster, the tower of London, castle of Berkhamstead; our manors of Kenyngton, Eltham, Claryndon, Shene, Byflete, Childern, Langeley, and Feck-

enham; our lodge at Hathebergh, and our lodges in our parks of Claryndon, Childerne and Feckenham; and our mutas for our falcons at Charyngcrouch: And to take all workmen, &c. and place them at our works; and to provide all stone, lead, glass, and other necessities. It also orders him to pay for all these—*et ad computandum de denariis, &c.* Ib. pp. 633—635.

<sup>18</sup> Ib. p. 635.

<sup>19</sup> Ib. p. 637.

<sup>20</sup> Ib. pp. 637, 638; this is dated 4 May 1398.

<sup>21</sup> Ib. pp. 638, 639; dated 15 Oct. 1398.



donation of the twenty marcs a year and the pipe of wine, and added a further annuity of forty marcs<sup>22</sup>. The last document as to Chaucer, is an indenture of lease, dated 24 December 1399, from the keeper of the chapel of the priory of Westminster, to Chaucer, of a tenement in the garden of the chapel, for a term of fifty-three years, at a rent of fifty-three shillings and fourpence<sup>23</sup>. This instrument proves that Chaucer was alive at the end of 1399, and was then well enough to take a new lease for fifty-three years.

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To these authenticated facts, we can add a few others from his Works. In his Testament of Love, he complains, that he had been either once or twice arrested<sup>24</sup>, and was in prison<sup>2</sup>, and abandoned by all. He talks highly of his former prosperity, and of the flattery and courtly respect which he then received<sup>26</sup>. He says, "Altho I had little in respect of other great and worthy, yet had I a faire parcel as me thoght for the time—I had richesse sufficiauntly to weive neede. I had dignitie to be reverenced in worship: power methought that I had to keepe fro mine enemies, and me seemed to shine in glory of renome as manhood asketh in meane; for no wight, in mine administration, could none evils ne trechery by soth cause on me put<sup>27</sup>." With this pleasing picture of former comforts, he contrasts his present unhappy state. "For richesse now have I povertye; for dignitie now am I emprisoned;

<sup>22</sup> Godw. App. pp. 639 & 640; dated 13 Oct. and 18 Oct. 1399.

<sup>23</sup> Ib. pp. 640 — 642. Thus the actual records that we have of Chaucer's life leave off when he was 59, according to the time of his birth stated in the text.

<sup>24</sup> "When thou were arrested and first time emprisoned." p. 284. "Is not thy first arrest passed that brought thee in mortal sorrow." p. 289.

<sup>25</sup> "I endure my penance in this dark

prison." p. 467. "Depe in this pining pit, with wo I lie stocked." p. 468.

<sup>26</sup> "While I was glorious in worldly wel-fulnesse and had soche goodes in wealth as maken men riche, tho was I draw into compaignie that loos, prise, and name yeven. Tho louteden blasours, tho curreiden glosours, tho welcomed flatterers, tho worshipped thilke that now damen not to looke." Chauc. Test. p. 279.

<sup>27</sup> Chauc. Test. p. 289.

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soned; instede of power, wretchednesse I suffer; and for glory of renome, I am now dispised and foulich hated<sup>28</sup>." He complains that his worldly goods had been "fullich dispent," and that he was "bereafte out of the dignitie of office<sup>29</sup>," in which he had accumulated his property. "Seven years have I grafted and grubbed a vine, and with all the ways I could I sought to fede me of the grape, but fruit have I found none<sup>30</sup>."

If we search his Works to discover why this reverse had befallen him, we find him declaring, that he had joined some "conjurations" in his youth, for objects that he thought noble and glorious to all the people<sup>31</sup>; that he cared little for the hate of the mighty senators of London, or of its commonalty<sup>32</sup>; that in the confederacies made by his "soveraigns," he was but a servant<sup>33</sup>. He intimates that he had made some discoveries, and when they were declared to be false, that he had offered to prove them by arms to be true; and that when the king and his princes "by huge wordes and great, looked after variaunce" in his speech, he had prepared his body for "Mars's doing, if any contraried his sawes<sup>34</sup>."

He mentions also his exile, and that those whom he had served, never refreshed him with the value of the least coined plate; that when he was imprisoned they fast hied; that some owed him money for their commons; that he had paid some of their expences

<sup>28</sup> Chauc. Test. p. 289.

<sup>29</sup> Ib. p. 280.

<sup>30</sup> Ib. p. 276.

<sup>31</sup> "In my youth I was drawn to be assenting, and in my might helping to certain conjurations and other great matters of ruling of citizens, and these things have been my drawers in and excitors to the matters—so painted and coloured—that at first to me seemed then noble and glorious to all the people." p. 277.

<sup>32</sup> Chauc. Test. p. 277.

<sup>33</sup> "Of tho confederacies maked by my soveraigns, I was but a servaunt; and yet mokell means folke woll fullye, ayenst reason, thilke matters mainteine, in which maintenaunce glorien themselfe; and thereof ought nothing in evile to be laid to me wards, sithen as repentant I am tourned." p. 289.

<sup>34</sup> Chauc. ib. 278. 284.



expences till they were turned out of Zealand; that none even gave him any thing for the journies he had made; that some of them took money for his chamber, and put the profit in their purse; that he had fled, as long as he could, to conceal their privity; and those who owed him money would pay nothing, because they thought his return impossible<sup>35</sup>. He asserts strongly his integrity while in office<sup>36</sup>. To what part of Chaucer's life, to which of the public events of Richard's reign, these personal evils are to be referred, is mere matter of conjecture, and must remain matter of doubt. There are other periods besides the one usually selected, to which they are applicable<sup>37</sup>.

A few more particulars of his life are intimated in some of his poems. We find him complaining, in his *Dream*, a poem written in his youth, that he was then in a state of nervous melancholy and

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<sup>35</sup> Chauc. Test. p. 278.

<sup>36</sup> "While I administered the office of common doing as in ruling of the stablishments emongs the people, I defouled never my conscience for no manner deede, but ever by wit and by counsaile of the wisest, the matters weren drawn to their right endes." p. 279. These expressions may allude to the royal buildings and establishments of which he was appointed the comptroller.

<sup>37</sup> Mr. Godwin refers them to his being concerned in the city troubles of John of Northampton. I would myself rather apply them to a later period. The 'stablishments' mentioned in the preceding note suit better his situation of clerk of the royal buildings, than the mere receipt of custom. The continued favours from Richard make it unlikely that he had joined any party against the court. The leave of absence for a month, in 1384, and the permission to appoint a deputy in 1385, are against the supposition

of his having been concerned with John of Northampton. The protection given him in 1398, implies that he was intermeddling in dangerous business for the king. It was in Sept. 1397 that Gloucester was murdered, and the next year Richard began those tyrannical and illegal measures, in which, from this singular protection, I am tempted to infer that Chaucer was assisting; for that actually states, that he was then transacting for the king, in various parts of England, 'ardua et urgentia negocia,' for which he might be inquieted and prosecuted (implacitari.) On this supposition, it may have been Henry who threw him into prison. That Henry, after his coronation, was kind to Richard's friends, we learn from his having been censured for it; and if he could forgive Salisbury, we may believe that Chaucer's genius and popularity would induce him not to leave the pleasing poet unpardoned or neglected.

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and mental indifference, from a habit of sleeplessness<sup>38</sup>; and that he was suffering a heaviness, and dread of death<sup>39</sup>. He refers to a sickness, which had lasted eight years, as the probable cause of it<sup>40</sup>. In his Prologue to the Legend of Good Women, he describes himself as preferring reading to every other amusement<sup>41</sup>. In his House of Fame, he alludes to his writing in his study, of a night, till his head became painfully affected<sup>42</sup>. He intimates, that when his labour and reckoning were done, he went home to become absorbed in reading instead of rest and novelties, and there lived like a hermit, except in abstinence<sup>43</sup>. He closes this poem with a determination to read and study every day<sup>44</sup>. He writes of Alchemy in his Chanones Yemaune's Tale, as if he had understood and

<sup>38</sup> I have great wonder by this light,  
How I live, for day ne night  
I may not sleepe, welnigh nought.  
I have so many an idle thought,  
Purely for default of sleepe;  
That by my trouth I take no keepe  
Of nothing, how it commeth or gothe;  
To me nis nothing lefe nor lothe.  
All is yliche good to me,  
Joy or sorrow, where so it be.  
For I have feeling in nothing;  
But as it were a mased thing.  
All day in point to fall adaun,  
For sorrowful imaginacioun,  
Is alway wholly in my mind.

Chaucer's Dream, 320.

<sup>39</sup> I ne may ne night ne morrow  
Sleepe, and this melancholie  
And drede I have for to die;  
Defaut of sleepe and heavinesse;  
Hath slaine my spirit of quickenesse.  
That I have lost all lustyhead,  
Such fantasies ben in mine head  
So I not what is best to do.—Ib.

<sup>40</sup> I hold it be a sicknesse  
That I have suffred this eight yore.—Ib.

<sup>41</sup> On bookes for to rede I me delite;  
And to hem yeve I faith and full credence:  
And in mine herte have hem in reverence,  
So hertely; that there is gane none  
That fro my bookes maketh no to gone.  
Prol. p. 299.

<sup>42</sup> - - - That thou wilt make  
A night full oft thine head to ake,  
In thy study so thou writest.  
House of Fame, p. 350.

<sup>43</sup> For whan thy labour all done is,  
And hast made all thy reckonings;  
Instead of rest and new things,  
Thou goest home to thine house anone,  
And also dombe as a stone,  
Thou sittest at another booke,  
Till fully dased is thy looke:  
And livest thus as an hermite,  
Although thine abstinence is lite.  
Ib. p. 350.

<sup>44</sup> Wherefore to study, and rede alway  
I purpose to do, day by day.  
Ib. p. 361.



and pursued it<sup>45</sup>; he builds this story upon it. His quotations from Seneca and Juvenal<sup>46</sup>, and his translation of Boethius<sup>47</sup>, announce his attention to the Classics. Of Dante and Petrarch, he speaks repeatedly in terms of high commendation, as if their works had been his favourites<sup>48</sup>.

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On the usual detail of Chaucer's life, beyond these authentic circumstances; and on the reasonings, often more ingenious than satisfactory, with which the additional surmises are supported; the former works of his able biographers and critics may be profitably consulted<sup>49</sup>. They place his death in 1400. Though I am not inclined to extend, with Leland, his life to the reign of Henry V.<sup>50</sup>, who acceded in 1413, yet I am not convinced that it ought not to be a few years later. But if his death be placed in 1400, still the year taken for his birth will allow him to have been sixty years of age when he died; a term old enough for all the intimations that relate to his age.

The chronology of Chaucer's works is as hypothetical as that of his life. That he wrote the Court of Love at eighteen, has been inferred from one of its lines, which yet seems to imply the contrary<sup>51</sup>. It would appear more natural that his first work should be his translation, 'The Romaunt of the Rose;' a translation  
remarkable

<sup>45</sup> Canterb. Tales, p. 138. <sup>46</sup> Ib. p. 53.

<sup>47</sup> Chalmers' ed.

<sup>48</sup> He calls Dante "The wise poet of Florence," Cant. Tales, p. 52, and often mentions him, as pp. 55. 127.—Of Petrarch, he says,

- - - - - The laureat Poete

- - - whos rhetorike swete

Enlumined all Itaille of poetrie.—p. 61.

<sup>49</sup> The principal of these are Leland's hasty sketch, Script. Brit. p. 419; Thomas Speght's Life, prefixed to his Works in 1597; Francis Thynne's Animadversions, 1599, lately printed by Mr. Todd; Tyrwhitt's Life, prefixed to the Canterbury Tales; Mr. Alex.

Chalmers' neat summary of his biography, in the first volume of his Poets; and Mr. Godwin's larger work.

<sup>50</sup> Lel. Script. Brit. p. 424. Yet that Chaucer was dead in 1410, when John the Chaplain wrote, may be inferred from his expressions noticed before.

<sup>51</sup> He says, Love commanded him to see the court of Love, "When I was young, at eighteen yeare of age." p. 367. This is not that he wrote the poem at 18. The imperfect tense *was* rather indicates, that though he makes that age the time of the action of his poem, he had passed beyond it when he wrote it.

remarkable for rendering his author commonly line by line, and yet with the spirit and freedom of an original poem <sup>52</sup>.

He refers, himself, to his Dream, as having been made in his youth <sup>53</sup>. This purports to be on Blanche, the dutchess of Lancaster <sup>54</sup>; and as she died in 1369, this fact settles both the chronology of the poem, and also of the time of Chaucer's youth <sup>55</sup>. His Troilus and Creseide has been referred to his youth by Lydgate <sup>56</sup>. His Legend of Good Women he wrote for the queen <sup>57</sup>; and in this he mentions, besides the poems already noticed, his House of Fame, the Parliament of Fowles, and Palamon and Arcite, his poem on the Magdalen, with some ballads and hymns <sup>58</sup>. In his House of Fame, he says that he was old <sup>59</sup>. His

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<sup>52</sup> Of this poem, the first 5370 French lines are translated in about 5700 of Chaucer's. This is the part written by the author who planned and begun the work. Chaucer then misses about 6000 lines of his original; and renders from verse 11253 to 13105 of the French second part, or 1852 lines, in about 1900 English, mostly exact, but sometimes paraphrased.

<sup>53</sup> In his Man of Lawes Prologue, he says of himself, 'In youthe he made of Ceyx and Alcyon,' p. 36, which is the first part of his Dream.

<sup>54</sup> He says,  
And faire *white* she hite,  
That was my ladies *name* right,  
She was thereto faire and bright.

She had not her name wrong.—p. 326.

He mentions her in his Prologue to the Legend of Good Women—

And eke the death of Blaunche the duchesse.  
p. 302.

<sup>55</sup> He could not therefore have been born in 1328, as that would make him 41 when he composed this poem. Taking the date of his birth as 1340, he would have been 29 when this lady died, which is full late enough for his youth. In this poem he mentions the

Romaunt of the Rose, p. 323. I would infer that he had then translated, or was translating it.

<sup>56</sup> Chaucer himself, in his Prologue to the Legend of Good Women, mentions his Romaunt of the Rose and Creside three times; but twice out of these he puts the Romaunt first:

Thou hast translated the Romaunt of the  
And of Creside - - - [Rose  
Or in the Rose, or else in Creseide.

<sup>57</sup> And "Whan this boke is made, yeve it  
the quene."—p. 302.

<sup>58</sup> Legend, p. 302.

<sup>59</sup> His 'reckenings,' mentioned in Note 43, have been thought by Mr. Tyrwhit to warrant the placing this poem before he left the Customs, or before 1386. But it will full as well suit his situation as comptroller of the king's works from 1389, in which his patent orders him to provide all the materials, to pay for them, and to *reckon* the money for them "ad computandum de denariis." See before, Note 17.—In 1389 he was, on our supposition, about 50. In any year between that and 1399, he may have written his House of Fame.



Canterbury Tales were his last compositions. Some specimens of his style and works may be now subjoined.

In "Troilus and Creseide" we have one of his longest poems, and that which was most admired by Beaumont and Sidney. As a whole, it is very tedious; but it displays that fluency of style and abundance of ideas, which lift Chaucer so much above his contemporaries. Some parts may be cited, to shew his power of dramatic and natural dialogue. Creside was a widow, when her uncle Pandarus visited her, to disclose the love of Troilus, and to persuade her to favour it :—

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WHEN he was come unto his neeces place

“Where is my lady?” to her folk quod he.

And they him told, and he forth in gan pace,

And found two other ladies sit, and shee

Within a paved parlour, and they three

Herden a maiden hem reden the geste

Of the seige of Thebes, while hem leste.

Quod Pandarus, “Madame, God you see,

With your booke, and all the companie.”

‘Eigh! Uncle mine! welcome i wis,’ quod she.

And up she rose, and by the hond in hie

She tooke him fast, and said, ‘This night shrie,

To good mote it turn, of you I met.’

And with that word, she down on bench him set.

“Yea, nece, ye shull faren well the bet,

If God woll, all this yeare,” quod Pandarus,

“But I am sorry that I have you let

To hearken of your booke, ye praisen thus.

For Godes love what saith it, tell it us.

Is it of love, or some good ye me lere.”

‘Uncle!’ quod she, ‘your maistresse is nat here.’

With that they gonnen laugh, and tho she seide,

‘This romaunce is of Thebes, that we rede.’

Quod

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Quod Pandarus, "All this know I my selve,  
And all th' assiege of Thebes, and the eare —  
But let be this, and tell me how ye fare.  
Do way your barbe, and shew your faee bare.  
Do way your book, rise up and let us daunee,  
And let us done to May some observaunee."

'Eigh, God forbid,' quod she, 'be ye mad?'  
Is that a widdowes life?

By God! ye maken me right sore adrad.

Ye ben so wild, it seemeth as ye rave.

It sat me well bet aye in a eave

To bide, and rede on holy saintes lives.

Let maidens gon to daunee, and yonge wives.'

"As ever thrive I," quod this Pandarus,

Yet could I tell a thing to done you play;

'Now, Uncle deare!' quod she, 'tell it us'—

He defers a while to gratify her curiosity—

Then gan she wondren more than before,

A thousand fold, and downe her eyen east.

For never sith the time that she was bore,

To knowen thing desired she so fast,

And with a sike, she said hem at the last,

'Now, Unele mine! I nill you not displease,

Nor asken more that may do you disease.'

Pandarus, apprehensive lest she should dislike his friend Troilus,  
hesitates to mention his subject:

And with that word he gan right inwardly

Beholden her, and looken in her faee,

And said, "On such a mirroure, much good grace."

And looked on her in busie wise.

And she was 'ware that he beheld her so.

'Ah, Lord!' quod she, 'so fast ye me avise,

Saw ye me never ere now; what say ye no.'

"Yes, yes," quod he, "and bet woll ere I go,

But by my trouth I thought nowe, if ye

Be fortunate. For now men shall it see<sup>60</sup>."

From

<sup>60</sup> Troilus and Creseid, pp. 237—239.



From this little natural picture of the easy sportive feelings, we may pass to the poet's portrait of his hero in his violent emotions. Troilus learns that his Creseide is to be sent out of Troy to the Grecian camp. His love takes the alarm, and fills him with grief:—

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He rest hem up, and every dore he shette  
And window eke, and tho this sorrowful man  
Upon his beddes side doune hem sette,  
Full like a dead image pale and wan:  
And in his breast the heaped wo began  
Outbrust; and he to worken in this wise  
In his woodnesse, as I shall you devise.

Right as the wilde bull beginneth spring  
Now here, now there i-darted to the herte;  
And of his death, roreth in complaining.  
Right so gan he about the ehamber stert,  
Smiting his breast, aye, with his fistes smert.  
His head to the wall, his body to the ground  
Full oft he swapt, himselven to eonfound.

His eyen two, for pitie of his herte,  
Outstremeden, as swift as welles twey.  
The highe sobes of his sorrowes smert  
His speech him reft. Unnethes might he sey  
'O death! alas! why nilt thou do me dey?  
Accursed be that day, which that nature  
Shope me to ben a lives creature.'

But after whan the fury, and all the rage  
Which that his heart twist, and fast threst,  
By length of time somewhat gan assuage;  
Upon his bed, he laid hem down to rest.  
But tho begon his teares more out to brest.  
That wonder is, the body may suffice  
To halfe this wo, which that I you devise.

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Than said he thus. ' Fortune! alas the while!  
 What have I done? What have I thee agilt?  
 How mightest thou for routhe me beguile?  
 Is there no grace? And shall I thus be spilt?  
 Shall thus Creseide away, for that thou wilt?  
 Alas! how mightest thou in thine herte find,  
 To ben to me, thus cruell and unkind!  
 Have I thee nat honoured all my live,  
 As well thou wotest, above the gods all?  
 Why wilt thou me fro joy thus deprive?  
 O Troilus!—what may men now thee call,  
 But wretch of wretches! out of honor fall  
 Into misery!—in which I woll bewaile  
 Creseide, alas! till that the breath me faile<sup>61</sup>.

With great strength of feeling he thus describes the meeting of the two lovers, after the order given for their separation, that she might be taken to her father, who was among the Grecians:

Sooth is, that whan they gonne first to mete,  
 So gan the paine hir hertes for to twist,  
 That neither of hem other mighte grete;  
 But hem in armes tooke, and after kist.  
 The lesse wofull of hem bothe nist  
 Where that he was; ne might o word outbring  
 As I said erst, for wo and for sobbing.  
 But whan hir wofull, very ghostes twaine  
 Returned ben, there as hem ought to dwell,  
 And that somewhat to weken 'gan the paine  
 By length of plaint; and ebben gan the well  
 Of his teares, and the herte unswell;  
 With broken voice—al horse for shright, Creseid  
 To Troilus, these ilke wordes seid.  
 " O Jove! I die—and mercy thee beseech.  
 Helpe Troilus!"—and therewithal her face  
 Upon his brest she laid, and lost her spech;  
 Her wofull spirite, from his proper place  
 Right with the word away, in point to pace.  
 And thus she lith; with hewes pale and grene;  
 That whilom fresh and fairest was to sene.

This

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<sup>61</sup> Troilus and Creseid, Book 4. p. 267.



This Troilus, that on her gan behold;  
 Cleping her name; and as she lay for deed  
 Withouten answe; and felt her limmes cold;  
 Her eien throwen upward to her heed;  
 This sorowful man, can now non other rede  
 But, oft time, her colde mouth he kist,  
 Where him was wo, God and himself it wist <sup>62</sup>.

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It is pleasing to see a great author entering, as it were, into a competition with himself, by attempting new descriptions of similar emotions. Nothing perhaps more displays the fertility and largeness of genius, than to depict resembling scenes with novelty, and yet with undiminished effect. Thus Chaucer paints Troilus again on his return from attending Creseide on her way to the Grecian camp:—

- - - With felon loke, and face dispitous,  
 Tho sodainly doune from his hors he stert  
 And through his paleis, with swolne herte,  
 To chamber he went. Of nothing toke he hede;  
 Ne none to him dare speke o worde for drede.

And there his sorowes that he spared had,  
 He yave an issue large, and death he cride:  
 And in his throwes, frenetike and mad,  
 He curseth Juno, Apollo, and eke Cupide;  
 He curseth Bacchus, Ceres, and Cipride;  
 His birth; himselfe; his fate; and eke nature;  
 And, save his ladie, every creature.

To bed he goth; and weileth there and turneth  
 In furie; as doth he, Ixion, in Hell;  
 And in this wise he, nigh till day sojourneth:  
 But tho began his herte alite unswell  
 Thro teares, which that gonnen up to wel;  
 And, pitiously, he cried upon Creseide.  
 And to himself right thus he spake and seide.

“ Where

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<sup>62</sup> Troilus and Creseid, Book 4. p. 274.

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" Where is mine owne lady, lefe and dere?  
Where is her white neck? where is it? where?  
Where been her armes, and her iyen elere,  
That yesterday, this time, with me were?

Now may I wepe alone many a teare,  
And graspe about I may:—But, in this place,  
Save a pilew, I find naught to embrace.

" How shal I doen? Whan shal she come againe?

I not; alas! why let I her go?  
Ah! would God I had as tho be slain!  
O herte mine! Creseide! O swete fo!  
O lady mine! that I love mo and mo.  
To whom for ever more mine herte I vowe;  
See how I die;—Ye nill me not reseowe.

" Who seeth you now, my right lodesterre?  
Who sitteth right now in your presence?  
Who ean comforten now your hertes werre?  
Now I am gon, whom yeve ye audience?  
Who speaketh for me right now in my absence?  
Alas! no wight—and that is all my care;  
For well wote I, as evill as I, ye fare."

And whan he fill in any slombringes,  
Anon begin he shoulde for to grone;  
And dremen of the dreadfullest thinges  
That might been: as mete he were alone  
In place horrible, making aie his mone;  
Or meten that he was emonges all  
His enemies, and in hir hondes fall.

And therewithall his bodie should start,  
And with the start, all sodainly awake;  
And soe he a tremour fele about his herte,  
That of the feare his bodie should quake.  
And therewithall he should a noise make,  
And seme as though he should fall depe  
From high alofe; and than he would wepe<sup>63</sup>.

It

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<sup>63</sup> Troilus and Creseid, Book 5. pp. 280, 281.



It is a pretty thought in Chaucer to make Troilus, in his calmer moments, revisit the spot where he had parted from her: CHAP.  
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And after this he to the gates went,  
There as Creseide outrode, a full good paas;  
And up and down there made he many a went,  
And to himselfe ful oft he said, "Alass!  
"Fro hence rode my blisse, and my solas;  
Ah, would blisful God now for his joie,  
I might here sene ayen come to Troie.  
"And to the yonder hil I gan her guide;  
Alas! and there I toke of her my leve;  
And yonde I saw her to her father ride,  
For sorow of which mine herte shal to cleve.  
And hither home I come when it was eve:  
And here I dwell, outeast from all joie,  
And shal, til I may sene her eft in Troie <sup>64</sup>."

It is a true touch of nature to make him suppose that other people were occupied with observing and pitying him:

Another time imagined he would,  
That every wight that went by the wey,  
Had of him routh, and that they saien should,  
'I am right sorry; Troilus wol dey.'  
And thus he drove a day yet forth, or twey,  
As ye have herde. Such life gan he lede,  
As he that stode betwixen hope and drede <sup>65</sup>.

Another action into which the poet puts him, is as natural—

And every night, as he was wont to done,  
He stode the bright moone to behold;  
And al his sorowe he to the moone told,  
And said, "I wis, whan thou art horned new  
I shall be glad, if al the world be trew."

That the recollection of the changeableness of the moon should suggest to him the wish that *all* the world might not resemble it, is  
a fine

<sup>64</sup> Troilus and Creseid, Book 5. pp. 283, 284.

<sup>65</sup> Ib. p. 284.

a fine stroke of nature, which has greater beauty when we observe the sequel of the story. Is the sentiment, that Troilus found his time so tedious that he fancied its proper course to be retarded, unnatural?

The day is more, and lenger every night  
Than they ben wont to be, him thought tho.  
And that the Sunne went his course unright,  
By lenger way than it was wont to go.

The next picture we may easily conceive of such an affectionate lover :

Upon the walles fast eke would he walke,  
And on the Greekes host he would see ;  
And to himselfe right thus he would talke ;  
“ Lo ! yonder is mine owne lady free ;  
Or else, yonder—there the tentes bee :  
And thence commeth this aire that is so soote,  
That in my soule, I fele, it doth me boote <sup>66</sup>.”

This we may allow to love ; though the following thought, that the increasing wind was his lady's deep sighs, we must consign to the limbo of Italian conceits. But Chaucer rarely offends from this cause.

One view more may be given of the adored lady, before she is exhibited in a different scene. If Troilus was distressed for her, she was equally interested for him, and for the city, her birth-place, in which he was living :—

Full pale iwoxen was her bright face ;  
Her limmes leane, as she that all the day  
Stode, whan she durst, and loked on the place  
Where she was borne, and dwelt had aye.  
And all the night weeping, “ Alass,” she lay ;  
And thus dispeired out of all cure  
She lad her life, this wofull creature.

Full

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<sup>66</sup> Troilus and Creseid, Book 5. p. 284.



Full oft aday she sighed eke for distresse  
 And in herself she went aye purtraying  
 Of Troilus the great worthinesse ;  
 And all his goodly wordes recording,  
 Sens first that day her love began to spring.  
 And thus she set her woful herte afire,  
 Through remembrance of that she gan desire.  
 Full rewfully she looked upon Troy ;  
 Beheld the toures high, and eke the hallis.  
 " Alass ! " quod she, " the plesaunce and the joy,  
 The which that now all turned into gall is,  
 Have I had ofte within yonder walles.  
 O Troilus ! what doest thou now ? " she seide ;  
 " Lord ! whether thou yet thinke upon Creseide <sup>67</sup>."

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When Shakespear's tragedy-queen expressed strongly her love for her husband, it was remarked, "The lady doth protest too much, methinks;" and the satirical prince replied, "Ay, but she'll keep her word."—Shall we not be displeased with our poet, to find that Creseide violated her's? After such impressive pictures of mutual love and mutual grief at a forced separation, can we pardon him for introducing another suitor, to seduce her into an unnecessary inconstancy? So however it was—or so he has fancied, that in the Grecian camp there was a Diomed—

- - - - - Prest and courageous,  
 With sterne voice and mighty limmes square,  
 Hardy, testife, strong, and chivalrous.

And he was seized with a desire "to winnen such a floure." He sat down by her, took spices and wine with her; spoke "of this and that, as friendes done;" and then asked her for her opinions about the battles with Troy. At last, he ventured to request her to dismiss both Troy and Trojans from her heart; to make good cheer—

"And clepe ayen the beautie of your face  
 That ye with salte teares so deface."

He

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<sup>67</sup> Troilus and Creseid, Book 5. p. 284.

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He proceeds to assure her, that she would find in Greeks a more perfect love, and persons more kind and more bent to serve her; and having now reached the climax of his eloquence and audacity, he adds without disguise—

“ And if ye vouchsafe, my lady bright!  
I woll ben he, to serven you myselve;  
Yea—lever than be lord of Greces twelve.”  
And with that word he gan to waxen reed;  
And in his speech a little while he quoke;  
And cast aside a little with his heed;  
And stint awhile, and afterward he woke;  
And soberly on her he threw his loke,  
And said, “ I am, albeit to you no joy,  
As gentill a man as any wight in Troy.”

It is due to the lady's reputation, to say, that she did not listen to him at first; and as he thought that he had spoken “ ynough for one day at the most,” he did not press her to hear more. But on the morrow, “ all freshly new againe he renewed his tale.” Still she thought of Troilus. “ Her glove he toke, of which he was full faine.” But Troilus still conquered. At last, what fortress is impregnable to an obstinate siege? Her constancy, her fidelity, gave way—“ This sillie woman falsed Troilus”—and the rest of the poem is occupied with describing his misery and her repentance. That a lady should desert, not an unfortunate but an unworthy lover, both her virtue and her good sense would demand and justify; but we may perhaps blame the poet as deviating a little out of nature, in making Troilus continuing to be noble, amiable, and affectionate, and yet to have been abandoned by his Creseide, merely because a new admirer urges her to be faithless. Whatever some weak women may have done, constancy has always been one of the principal virtues of their sex, and the want of it one of the greatest reproaches of ours. Chaucer had  
certainly



certainly a right to take the rare deformity for the subject of his poem. But to attach it to an amiable and natural character, uncaused, and contrary to her represented qualities, was converting the exception into a general example of the sex. To mark Creseide as the anomaly and not the specimen, corresponding imperfections should have pervaded her character. But these are not exhibited. Hence, as he has drawn her, the character is incongruous, and its effects injurious to the high honour of that Sex—by whom the civilization of the world has in every age been most advanced; whose virtues increase and soften ours; whose manners and opinions first influence those of the rising generation; among whom benevolence has never wanted an advocate, the domestic charities affectionate examples, or religion and morals sincere and unaffected votaries<sup>68</sup>. It appears that the fair sex in his own time complained of his undeserved satire, and that he wrote his *Legend of Good Women* as an atonement.

There are some pleasing effusions in his ‘*Assembly of Fowles*.’ The object of this poem is to exalt the nature of Love, and to unite it with honour and constancy. Hence he conducts it so as to exhibit a contrast between the opinions of the superior and common classes of mankind upon this feeling. The passage on *Dreams* is begun well:

The wearie hunter sleeping in his bedde,  
 The wood ayen his mind goeth anone;  
 The judge dremeth how his plees be spedde;  
 The carter dremeth how his cartes gone;  
 The rich of gold, the knight fight with his fone;  
 The sicke mette he drinketh of the tonne,  
 The lover mette he hath his lady wonne<sup>69</sup>.

His

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<sup>68</sup> I should be ungrateful for the happiness of twenty years, and blind to the main source of the future improvement of mankind, if

I could form a different judgment on this interesting subject.

<sup>69</sup> *Assemb. of Fowles*, p. 330.

His account of the Trees is a poetical conception, but not well finished ; Milton and Pope have imitated it more successfully :—

The bilder oke ; and eke the hardy asshe ;  
The piller elme, the coffre unto caraine ;  
The boxe pipe tree ; holme to wheps lasshe ;  
The sailing firre ; the cipres death to plaine ;  
The shooter ewe ; the aspe for shaftes plaine ;  
The olive of peace ; and eke the drunken vine ;  
The victor palme ; the laurer to divine <sup>70</sup>.

He shews an eye to mark the beautiful objects of nature ; and a heart to feel the beautiful in its true delight :—

A gardein saw I full of blossomed bowis  
Upon a river, in a grene mede.  
There as sweetnesse evermore inough is  
With floures white, blewe, yelowe and red.  
And cold welle streames, nothing dede,  
That swommen full of small fishes light,  
With finnes rede and scales silver bright <sup>71</sup>.

A more perfect metre in the verse, and a more careful selection of phrase, would have made this a fine passage. The next verse is still better :—

On every bough the birdes heard I sing  
*With voice of angell* in hir armonie.  
That busied hem hir birdes forth to bring  
The little pretty conies to her play gan hie.  
And further all about I gan espie,  
The dredful roe, the buck, the hart and hind,  
Squirrels and beastes small of gentle kind.  
Therewith a wind unneth it might be lesse  
Made in the leaves grene a noise soft  
Aceordant to the foules song on loft <sup>72</sup>.

His display of the different species of Birds is done with some original poetry, though it would have been improved if it had been shorter, and more select :—

There was the tyrant with his feathers don  
And grene, I mean the goshawke that doth pine  
To birdes for his outrageous ravine.

The

<sup>70</sup> Assemb. of Fowles, p. 331.

<sup>71</sup> Ib.

<sup>72</sup> Ib.



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The gentle faucon that with his fete distreineth  
 The king's hand—the hardy sperhawke eke  
 The quales foe ; the merlion that peineth  
 Himself full oft the larke for to seke :  
 There was the dove, with her iyen meke ;  
 The jelous swan, ayenst his deth that singeth ;  
 The oul eke, that of deth the bode bringeth.  
 The crane, the giant, with his tromps sounes ;  
 The thief, the chough ; and the chattring pie :  
 The scorning jaie. The eles foe the heroune.  
 The false lapwing, full of trecherie.  
 The stare that the counsaile can bewrie ;  
 The tame ruddocke and the coward kite :  
 The cocke, that horiloge is of thropes lite.  
 The sparrow, Venus' son, and the nightingale  
 That cleapeth forth the fresh leaves new ;  
 The swallow, murderer of the bees smale,  
 That maken honie of floures fresh of hew ;  
 The wedded turtell with his herte true ;  
 The pecocke with his angel fethers bright ;  
 The fesaunt, scorner of the cocke by night <sup>73</sup>.

The descriptive traits are not all equally successful, but they are mostly original. There is great delicacy in depicting the tame falcon as pressing the king's hand, that holds it, gently with its claws.

It is a pretty picture which he draws of the female eagle, for whose preference three royal birds were contending :—

- - - - - Nature held on her hond  
 A formell egle, of shape the gentillest  
 That ever she among her workes fond.  
 The most benigne and eke the goodliest.  
 In her was every virtue at his rest.  
 So far forth, *that Nature herself had blisse*  
*To looke on her and ofte her beeke to kisse* <sup>74</sup>.

The

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The competition of three eagles for the favourite lady, making the rest of the feathered assembly impatient for their dismissal, the goose utters her advice to the rivals, that if she will not “love him, let him love another.” The duck seconds this remark, by adding—

----- Full well and fair  
There be mo sterres in the skie than a pair.

These opinions give occasion to Chaucer to display his high-minded sentiments on Love. To the goose he makes the turtle reply—

“Nay, God forbede a lover should chaunge,”  
The turtle said, and wex for shame all red;  
“Though that his lady evermore be straunge,  
Yet let him serve her alway till he be deed.  
Forsooth; I praise not the gooses reed.  
For tho she died, I would none other make;  
I will be hers, till that the death me take.”

He answers the duck by the high-born eagle—

“Now, fie, churle,” quod the gentle tercelet.  
“Out of the dunghill came that word aright.  
Thou canst not see which thing is well beset.  
Thou farest by love, as owles do by light.  
The day hem blindeth; full well they see by night.  
Thy kind is of so low wretchedness,  
That what love is, thou canst nor se nor gess<sup>75</sup>.”

In his “Complaint of the Black Knight,” there is more memory, mythology, and rhetoric, than poetry or feeling; but it contains some specimens of his taste for the beauties of rural nature:—

I rose anone and thought I would gone  
Into the wodde to heare the birdes sing;  
Whan that the misty vapour was agone,  
And cleare and faire was the morning  
The dewe also, like silver in shining  
Upon the leaves as any baume swete<sup>76</sup>.

He

<sup>75</sup> Assemb. of Fowles, p. 334.

<sup>76</sup> Compl. Black Knight, p. 338.



He meets with a spring of water, which he calls a well—

The gravel, gold; the water, pure as glasse;  
 The bankes round, the well environyng;  
 And soft as velvet the yong grasse  
 That thereupon lustely came springyng.  
 The sute of trees about compassyng  
 Hir shadow east <sup>77</sup> - - - - -

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In his Dream on the death of Blanche, he tells us, that being sleepless, he took a romance “to rede and drive the night away.” It was the story of Ceyx and Alcione. The book brought on the sleep he wanted, and he fancies that it was accompanied by a dream. He begins with describing a morning hunt:—


My windowes weren shut echone;  
 And through the glasse the sunne shone  
 Upon my bed with bright bemes,  
 With many glad, glidy stremes;  
 And eke the welkin was so faire.  
 Blew, bright, elere was the aire  
 And full attempred, sooth it was  
 For neyther too cold ne hote it nas.  
 Ne in all the welkin was no eloud.  
 And as I lay thus, wonder loud  
 Methought I heard a hunter blow  
 T’ assay his great horne, and for to know,  
 Whether it was elere or horse of sowne;  
 And I heard going both up and downe,  
 Men, horse, hounds and other thing  
 And all men speake of hunting,  
 How they would slee the hart with strength.

I was right glad, and up anone  
 Tooke my horse, and forth I went  
 Out of my chamber. I never stent  
 Till I came to the field without,  
 There overtooke I a great rout

Of

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<sup>77</sup> Compl. Black Knight, p. 338.

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Of hunters, and eke forresters,  
And many relaies and limers.  
They highed hem to the forrest fast :  
And I with hem - - - - -  
Whan we come to the forrest side,  
Every man did right soone  
As to hunting fell to done.

The Maister hunter anone fote-hote  
With his horne blew three mote,  
At the uncoupling of his houndis.  
Within a while the hart found is.  
I hallowed ; and rechased fast ;  
Long time ; and so at the last  
This hart roused, and stale away,  
Fro all the hounds a previe way.  
The hounds had overshot him all,  
And were upon a default yfall.  
Therewith the hunter, wonder fast  
Blew a forloyn at the last<sup>78</sup>.

The object of his Dream is to introduce a knight in black, whom he found in the forest mourning under an oak. This personage is intended to be John of Gaunt, the well-known duke of Lancaster, lamenting the loss of his lady, Blanche. The grief of the widowed knight is loquacious and learned, but has so little connexion with nature, and so little adapted to awaken the feeling of its readers, that we might let it sleep undisturbed in the natural oblivion of antiquity, but that some few passages display the true genius of Chaucer, and claim to be rescued from the fate of the rest. Chaucer is never more himself than in describing an interesting female, and thus he pourtrays the lamented Blanche :

I sawe her daunce so comely,  
Carol, and sing so sweetly,  
Laugh, and play so womanly,  
And looke so debonairly,  
So goody speke, and so friendly ;

That

<sup>78</sup> Dream, p. 322.



That certes I trowe that evermore  
 Nas sene so blisful a tresore.  
 For every heer on her head,  
 Sothe to say it was not red;  
 Ne neither yelow, ne browne it nas;  
 Methought most like gold it was.  
 And which eyen my lady had,  
 Debonnaire, good, glad and sad—  
 It nas no counterfeted thing.  
 It was her own pure loking.  
 That the Goddesse, dame Nature  
 Had made hem open by measure  
 And close; for were she never so glad,  
 Her looking was not folish sprad.  
 Ne wildely, though that she plaied.  
 But ever me-thought her eyen said  
 By God, my wrath is all forgive.—

But many one with her loke she hurte;  
 And that sate her full litel at herte:  
 For she knew nothing of their thought.  
 But whether she knew or knew it nought  
 Algate she ne rought of them a stree,  
 To get her love no nere nas he,  
 That woned at home, than he in Inde.

So greet a thing for to devise  
 I have not wit that can suffise  
 To comprehend her beaute.  
 But thus much I dare sain, that she  
 Was white, rody, fresh and lifely hewed;  
*And every day her beaute newed.*  
 And nigh her face was alderbest.  
 For certes, Nature had such lest  
 To make that faire, that truly she  
 Was her chief patron of beaute.  
 - - - - *For be it never so derke*  
*Methinketh I see her ever mo.*  
 And yet, moreover, though all tho

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That

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That ever lived, were now alive,  
Ne would have found they to describe  
In all her face, a wicked signe,  
For it was sad, simple, and benigne.—

I say not that she ne had knowyng  
What harme was, or els she  
Had con'd no good, so thinketh me—

And I dare saine and swere it wele  
That Trough himself, over al and al,  
Had chose her manor principal  
In her, that was his resting place<sup>79</sup>.

The knight or duke's description of the first disclosure of his love is interesting to us, as well for its poetical merit as for its picture of the manners of the day on these occasions—

- - - - - Upon a day  
I bethought me what wo,  
And sorowe that I suffred tho  
For her, and yet she wist it nought  
Ne tell her, durst I not, my thought.  
Alas! thought I, I can no rede;  
And but I tell her I am dede.  
And if I tel her, to say right soth,  
I am adradde, she woll be wroth.  
Alas! what shall I than do?  
In this debat I was so wo,  
Methought mine herte brast a twain;  
So at the last, sothe for to saine,  
I bethought me that nature  
Ne formed never in creature,  
So much beauty trewly  
And bounty without mercy.

In hope of that my tale I tolde—  
I no't well how that I began—  
For many a word I overskipt  
In my tale for pure fere,  
Lest my wordes misse set were—

Full

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<sup>79</sup> Dream, pp. 326, 327.



Full oft I wexte, both pale and red.  
 Bowing to her, I hung the head;  
 I durst not ones looke her on.  
 For wit, manner, and all, was gone.  
 I said, " Merey"—and no more.  
 It nas no gaine. It sate me sore.

So at the last soth to saine  
 Whan that myne herte was eom againe,  
 To tell her shortly all my speech,  
 With hole herte, I gan her beseech,  
 That she wolde be my lady swete,  
 And swore, and hertely gan her herte,  
 Ever to be stedfast and trewe;  
 And love her alway freshly newe;  
 And never other lady have,  
 And all her worship for to save.  
 As I best coude, I sware her this,  
 " For yours, is all that ever there is;  
 For evermore; mine herte swete!  
 And never to false you; but I mete  
 I nyl; as wise God help me so."

And whan I had my tale ydo  
 God wote, she aecompted not a stre  
 Of al my tale, so thought me.—  
 Trewly her answer—it was this—  
 I cannot now well counterfete  
 Her wordes. But this was the grete  
 Of her answer. She said, ' Nay.'  
 All, utterly! Alass, that day!  
 The sorow I suffered and the wo!  
 I durst no more say thereto,  
 For pure feere: but stale away.  
 And thus I lived full many a day  
 That trewly I had no need,  
 Ferther than my beddes heed,  
 Never a day, to seeke sorrow.  
 I found it ready every morrow.  
 For why? I loved in no gere.

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So it befell another yere.  
I thought ones I would fonde  
To doe her know and understonde  
My wo. And she well understood  
That I ne wilned thing but good,  
And worship ; and to keepe her name,  
Over all things, and drede her shame,  
And was so busie her to serve<sup>80</sup>.

He proceeds to say, that when his lady knew all this, she gave him “the noble gift of her mercy,” and a ring. He describes himself as then becoming “the gladdest and the most at rest,” of all men.

In his FLOWER AND THE LEAF, we read the effusions of a mind deeply captivated by the charms of rural nature, and artlessly communicating the pleasures he experiences. A path of little breadth, “that greatly had not used been,” and so “far grown with grass and weed,” that “a wight” might with difficulty see it, leads him to a pleasant arbour,

That benched was, and with turfes new  
Freshly turned, whereof the greene grass  
So small, so thicke, so fresh of hew,

was surrounded “with sicamour and eglatere.” It was so shaped,

That who that lest without to stond or go,  
Though he would all day prien to and fro,  
He should not see, if there was any wight  
Within or no ;— - - - -

yet those within the arbour might perceive all that moved

In the field that was on every side  
Covered with corn and grasse—

Having brought us here, he says of himself,  
Thought sodainly I felt so sweet an aire  
Of the eglantere, that certainly,  
There is no herte I deme in such dispaire,  
Ne with thoughts froward and contraire  
So overlaid, but it should soone have bote,  
If it had once felt this savour sote.

And

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<sup>80</sup> Dream, p. 329.



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And as I stood, and east aside mine cie,  
 I was ware of the fairest medle tree  
 That ever yet in all my life I sie,  
 As full of blossomes as it might be.  
 Therein a goldfinch, leaping prettile  
 Fro bough to bough, and as him lest, he eat  
 Here and there, of buds and floures sweet.

This playful visitant began to sing, and as he ended,

The nightingale with so merry a note  
 Answered him, that all the wood rong  
 So sodainly, that as it were a sote  
 I stood astonied; so was I with the song  
 Thorow ravished, that till late and long,  
 I ne wist in what plaece I was, ne where.

He discovered the melodious charmer at last upon a laurel-tree; and he was so enchanted, that he desired to go no farther that day:—

- - - - And on the sweet grass  
 I sat me downe; for, as for mine entent,  
 The birds song was more convenient,  
 And more pleasaunt to me by manifold  
 Than meat or drinke, or any other thing—

But this was not all his enjoyment. Other gratifications were approaching him, which he describes with great spirit:—

And as I sat the birds harkening thus,  
 Methought that I heard voices sodainly;  
 The most sweetest and most delieious,  
 That ever any wight I trow truly  
 Heard in their life, for the armony  
 And sweet aecord was in so good musike,  
 That the voicee to angels most was like.  
 At the last, out of a grove even by,  
 That was right goodly, and plesant to sight;  
 I sie, where there eame singing lustily  
 A world of ladies, but to tell aright  
 Their great beauty, it lieth not in my might.

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POETRY.

In surcotes white of velvet wele sitting  
 They were yclad, and the semes echone  
 Was set with emerauds, one and one  
 By and by, but many a rich stone  
 Was set on the purples, out of dout,  
 Of colours, sleves and traines round about.

Every lady had

----- on her head  
 A rich fret of gold, which, without dread,  
 Was full of stately rich stones set;  
 And every lady had a chapelet  
 On her head of fresh and grene—  
 Some of laurel and some full pleasauntly  
 Had chapelets of woodbind; and sadly  
 Some of agnus castus were also.—

This delightful party “all followed the pace” of one, “whose heavenly-figured face” and well-shaped person, far surpassed them all:

And she began a roundell lustely—  
 And then the company answered all  
 With voices sweet entuned, and so small  
 That, methought it the sweetest melody,  
 That ever I heard in my life soothly.  
 And thus they came, dauncing and singing,  
 Into the middest of the mede echone  
 Before the herber where I was sitting—

But suddenly the poet changes the actors of his scene, and exerts his descriptive powers in a contrasted picture:—

They had not daunced but a little throw  
 Whan that I heard not ferre off, sodainly,  
 So great a noise of thundring trumpets blow  
 As though it should have de-parted the skie.  
 And after that, within a while, I sie,  
 From the same grove where the ladies come out  
 Of men of armes, comming such a rout  
 As all the men on earth had been assembled  
 In that place, well horsed for the nones  
 Stering so fast, that all the earth trembled.

The



The first that appeared were in white clokes, with fresh chaplets of oak, and trumpets, and “on every trumpe hanging a broad banere.” After them issued kings of armes “in clokes of white cloth of gold,” with “chaplets of greene on their heads on hie :” And

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The crowns that they on their seochones bere  
Were set with pearle, ruby, and saphere.

Heralds and pursuivants followed in white velvet :

Next after hem came, in armour bright  
All, save their heads, seemely knightes nine.  
And every elaspe and naile, as to my sight,  
Of their harnies, were of red gold fine.  
With cloth of gold, and furred with ermine  
Were the trappers of their stedes strong,  
Wide and large, that to the ground did hong.

Every knight was attended with three henshmen ; one carrying his helmet, another his shield, the third “upright, a mighty spere.”

And so they came their horses freshly stering  
With bloody sownes of hir trompes loud—  
And at the last, as evenly as they coud  
They took their places in middes of the mede,  
And every knight turned his horses hede  
To his fellow, and lightly laid a spere  
In the rest, and so justes began,  
On every part about, here and there :  
Some brake his spere ; some drew down hors and man.  
About the field, astray, the steeds ran :  
And to behold their rule and governaunee  
I you ensure it was a great plesaunee <sup>81</sup>.

The Prologue to his *Canterbury Tales* is one of the finest specimens of the pourtraiture of character and persons that the English language possesses <sup>82</sup>; and some of his *Tales* display a power of poetical narration, which all may envy, and which few will ever equal <sup>83</sup>.

Dryden

<sup>81</sup> Flower and Leaf, 395—397.

<sup>82</sup> Mr. Todd has printed this, with valuable notes, in his *Illustrations*.

<sup>83</sup> Mr. Tyrrel has published these separately from Chaucer's other works, with one of the best accounts of the poet, prefixed.

Dryden and Pope have made some of the best of these familiar to the British public. Yet as specimens of Chaucer's latest and most improved style, we may cite the picture of his Young Squire,

<sup>84</sup> Young SQUIRE:—Embrouded was he, as it were a mede,  
Alle ful of freshe floures, white and rede.  
Singing he was, or floyting alle the day.  
He was as fresh, as is the moneth of May.  
Short was his gowne, with sleeves long and wide.  
Wel coude he sitte on hors, and fayre ride.  
He coude songes make, and wel endite:  
Juste and eke dance, and wel pourtraie, and write.  
Curteis he was, lowly, and servisable,  
And carf before his fader at the table.

Prol. Cant. Tales, p. 4.

<sup>85</sup> The YEOMAN:— - - - He was cladde in cote and hode of grene;  
A shefe of peacock arwes bright and kene,  
Under his belt he bare ful thriftily.  
Wel coude he dresse his takel yemanly:  
His arwes drouped not with fetheres lowe;  
And in his hond he bare a mighty bowe.—Ib. p. 4.

<sup>86</sup> The PRIORESS:—Ther was also a nonne, a Prioressse,  
That of hire smiling was ful simple and coy;  
Hire greatest othe n'as but by seint Eloy;  
And she was cleped, madame Eglentine.  
Ful wel she sange the service devine,  
Entuned in hire nose ful swetely:  
And Frenche she spake ful fayre and fetisly;  
After the scole of Stratford atte bowe,  
For Frenche of Paris was to hire unknowe.  
At mete was she wel ytaughte withalle;  
She lette no morsel from hire lippes falle,  
Ne wette hire fingres in hire sauce depe.  
Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe.

- - - - -  
And sikerly she was of grete disport  
And ful plesant, and amiable of port.  
She was so charitable, and so pitous,  
She wolde wepe if that she saw a mous  
Caughte in a trappe, if it were ded or bledde.  
Of smale houndes hadde she, that she fedde  
With rosted flesh, and milk, and wastel brede:  
But sore wept she if on of hem were dede,  
Or if men smote it with a yerde smert:  
And all was concience and tendre herte.—Ib. p. 4.



Squire<sup>84</sup>, and the Yeoman<sup>85</sup>, as representing two large portions of his contemporaries—with some traits of his Prioress<sup>86</sup>, his Monk<sup>87</sup>, and Friar<sup>88</sup>..... To these we shall only add his portrait

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<sup>84</sup> See Notes 84—85—86—in preceding page.

<sup>87</sup> The MONK:—A manly man; to ben an abbot able.

Full many a deinte hors hadde he in stable.  
And whan he rode, men mighte his bridel here  
Gingeling in a whistling wind, as clere  
And eke as loude, as doth the chapell belle.

— — — — —  
He yave not of the text a pulled hen  
That saith that hunters ben not holy men,  
Ne that a monk whan he is rekkeles  
Is like a fish that is waterles.  
This is to say a monk out of his cloistre  
This ilke text held he not worth an oistre.

— — — — —  
I saw his sleeves purfiled at the hond  
With gris, and that the finest of the lond.  
And for to fasten his hood under his chinne,  
He hadde of gold ywrought a curious pinne:  
A love-knotte in the greter end ther was.  
His hed was balled, and shone as any glas,  
And eke his face, as it hadde been anoint.  
He was a lord ful fat and in good point.  
His eyen stepe, and nothing in his hed.

— — — — —  
He was not pale as a forpined gost.  
A fat swan loved he best of any rost.

Prol. Cant. Tales, p. 4.

<sup>88</sup> The FRIAR:—Ful wel beloved, and familiar was he  
With frankeleins over all in his contree;  
And eke with worthy wimmen of the toun:  
For he had power of confession.

— — — — —  
He was an easy man to give penance,  
There as he wiste to han a good pittance.

— — — — —  
His tippet was ay farsed ful of knives,  
And pinnes, for to given fayre wives.  
And certainly he had a mery note,  
Wel coude he singe and plaien on a rote.

— — — — —  
His nekke was white as is the flour de lis.  
Thereto he strong was as a champion,  
And knew wel the tavernes in every toun,

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of Emily<sup>89</sup>, which Dryden has so much improved, and of Arcite in his grief<sup>90</sup>; the simile of Arcite's meeting with Palamon for deadly

The FRIAR      And every hosteler and gay tapstere,  
(*continued.*)      Better than a lazer or a beggere,  
For unto swiche a worthy man as he,  
Accordeth nought, as by his faculte,  
To haven with sike lazars, acquaintance,  
It is not honest, it may not advance.

- - - - -  
Curteis he was, and lowly of servise.  
Ther n'as no man no wher so vertuous.  
He was tha beste begger in all his hous.

- - - - -  
Somewhat he lisped for his wantonesse,  
To make his english swete upon his tonge;  
And in his harping, whan that he hadde songe,  
His eyen twinkeled in his hed aright,  
As don the sterres in a frosty night.

Prol. Cant. Tales, p. 5.

<sup>89</sup> EMILY: — - - Emelie that fayrer was to sene,  
Than is the lilie upon his stalke grene,  
And fresher than the May with floures newe,  
For with the rose colour strof hire hewe.  
I n'ot which was the finer of hem two.  
Er it was day, as she was wont to do,  
She was arisen, and all redy dight—  
Hire yelwe here was broided in a tresse,  
Behind hire back, a yerde longe I gesse.  
And in the gardin at the sonne uprest,  
She walketh up and down whenas hire lest.  
She gathereth floures, partie white and red,  
To make a sotel gerlond for hire hed;  
And as an Angel hévenlich she song.—Ib. p. 11.

<sup>90</sup> ARCITE:—Ful oft a day he swelt, and said, 'Alas!'  
For sen his lady shal he never mo—  
His slepe, his mete, his drinke is him byraft;  
That leue he wex, and drie as is a shaft.  
His eyen holwe, and grisly to behold,  
His hewe falwe, and pale as ashen cold.  
And solitary he was, and ever alone,  
And wailing all the night, making his mone.  
And if he herde song, or instrument,  
Than wolde he wepe, he might not be stent,  
So feble were his spirites and so low.—Ib. p. 13.



deadly combat<sup>91</sup>, and an extract from their final battle<sup>92</sup>. It is but rarely that we find Chaucer deviating into absurdity; yet he has occasionally a conceit<sup>93</sup>, and a thought both false and extravagant<sup>94</sup>.

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Among many passages like these which have been cited, Chaucer abounds with others that are prosaic, uninteresting, and tedious.

But

<sup>91</sup> And in the grove, at time and place ysette,  
This Arcite and this Palamon ben mette.  
Tho changen gan the colour of hir face;  
Right as the hunter in the regne of Trace,  
That stondeth at a gappe with a spere,  
Whan hunted is the lion or the bere;  
And hereth him come rushing in the greves,  
And breking bothe the boughes and the leves;  
And thinketh, here cometh my mortal enemy  
Withouten faille, he must be ded or I.

Prol. Cant. Tales, p. 15.

<sup>92</sup> The heraudes left hir priking up and doun.  
Now ringen trompes loud and clarioun.  
Ther is no more to say, but est and west,  
In gon the speres sadly in the rest;  
In goth the sharpe spere into the side:  
Ther see men who can juste, and who can ride:  
Ther shiveren shaftes upon sheldes thicke;  
He feleth thurgh the herte sponne the pricke.  
Up springen speres twenty foot on highte;  
Out gon the swerdes as the silver brighte.  
The helmes they to-hewen, and to-shrede;  
Out brest the blod, with sterne stremes rede.  
With mighty maces the bones they to-breste.  
He thurgh the thickest of the throng gan threste  
Ther stomblen stedes strong, and doun goth all;  
He rolleth under foot as doth a ball.—1b. p. 22.

<sup>93</sup> Thus —

For who so seeth me first on morrow,  
May saine, he hath met with sorrow;  
For I am sorrow, and sorrow is I.—Chauc. Dream, p. 324.

<sup>94</sup> We should scarcely have expected from Chaucer so wild an idea as  
Of instruments of stringes in accord,  
Heard I so play a ravishing swetnesse,  
That God, that maker is of all, and Lord,  
Ne heard never better, as I gesse.

Assemb. of Fowles, p. 331.

But to quote the wearisome dulness of any author would be useless, either as history or criticism. All writers are at times unequal to themselves. Every work, like every prospect, has its lights and shadows, its beauties and its deformities. But the interesting parts are those which influence the minds and feelings of their fellow-creatures. Their dulnesses are disliked as fast as they are perceived; are soon forgotten, and become obsolete; while the brighter passages command the attention, impress the memory, affect the sensibilities, and excite the imitation of their readers. Genius gives them the wings with which they fly to distant regions, and through successive periods, producing every where a fond admiration and a congenial offspring. The beauties of a great author shew the cultivated excellencies both of his own mind, and of that of his contemporaries. For, as his dulness represents the general level of the age as he found it, his beauties, diffusing themselves among his countrymen, raise their intellectual improvements to the elevation of his own. The successful passages of every author are therefore those, which mark the true literary rank and progress of the country. They are the mirrors which have reflected the lights that have enabled us to perceive their accompanying defects. No man would present "Love's labour lost" as a just specimen of Shakespear, or cite the free-will debates and poems of Milton, to represent the mind and powers of his majestic epopée.

But the modern reader, improved by the accessions of thought and knowledge which the English mind has obtained during the four centuries that have elapsed since Chaucer's death, cannot peruse his works without perceiving the fewness and the defects of the mental and moral associations which they contain. He wanted Gower's knowledge and ethical taste, as much as Gower wanted his command of language and poetical power. Or rather, the  
English



English intellect, weak on its first emerging from ignorance, superstition, and verbal logic, was only beginning to be original, and to think philosophically on life and nature. Hence the puerile reflections and versified inanity which both Gower and Chaucer frequently display. In the passages where Chaucer dramatises the manners of his day, or carries the voice of nature to the heart, or exhibits his characters and incidents as if passing in living motion before us, he produces an interest which neither the little feeblenesses that even here intermingle themselves, nor their unpruned prolixity, can destroy; but beyond these, he, like Gower, is dull, unmeaning now, and unreadable. Few poets have written so much, which so few desire to peruse or attempt to disturb. With several of the natural powers of Shakespear, he had not Shakespear's moral taste or sensibility, his abundant yet classical fancy, or his intellectual amplitude, vigour, or aspiring sublimity. In Shakespear, the philosopher is inseparable from the poet—the Homer and the Socrates are scarcely ever disunited. In Shakespear, the sublime and eagle-eyed observer of life and manners, ever meditating as well as painting, so profusely blends his instruction with his poetry, so instinctively reasons as well as feels—that the most persuasive lessons of virtue and honour—a complete code of ethical rules, both for the great and little morals of life—and in example as well as precept—may be drawn from his works<sup>95</sup>. But in all Chaucer's poems, except his last, he has few characters

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<sup>95</sup> I have been surprised at hearing some sensible men object to a family Shakespear. I do not know how the one published under that title has been executed; but although we should always chuse to have the whole of Shakespear in our library, to contemplate the poet at full length, yet surely a selection from his works, retaining all that is now interesting and useful, and omitting that

which we have outlived, would be a desirable acquisition to every man of taste. Indeed I never look at Mr. Chalmers' edition of the Poets, without thinking that if some capacious, truly feeling, and correctly judging mind, were to select from all our poets those parts which, from their interest, beauty, or usefulness, are qualified to be the delight and the property of all ages, the fame of our

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but knights and lovers. His sentiments are usually those of a fantastic gallantry; and this fashion of life, so unlike the real affection of persons of intellect and genuine nature, having long since become obsolete, the reading popularity of Chaucer has departed with it. Chaucer rather felt love as the man of fashion in the fourteenth century, than as the man of nature of every age and clime. He was the poetical rhetorician of knight-errantry, more than the true and unaffected lover. Hence, though the loss of Shakespear would be a subtraction from the general intellect of mankind, the loss of the bulk of Chaucer's writings would be little more than the oblivion of some of the long-passed manners and overstrained feelings of his day. But with all this deduction, he has many parts which, especially when combined with the excellencies of Dryden's mind and style, neither the poet nor the critic will in any age suffer to be forgotten.

poetry, and the intellect and character of our countrymen, would be greatly enhanced. As they now appear, with all their sins, dulnesses and incumbrances on their heads, and in full and wearisome display, the works of most

of them might as well be reposing with their authors in the tomb. The public seem inclined to disturb the one as little as the other. The oblivious decree will only become more irreversible as time passes on.

IT is but justice to Chaucer to notice the high estimation with which his contemporaries regarded him. John the Chaplain calls him 'Flour of rhetoryk.' Occleve laments him as his dear master and father, and styles him 'the honour of English tongue; floure of eloquence; mirror of fruc-

tuous entendement; universal fadre of science.' Lydgate, who also styles him 'my maister,' calls him 'chiefe poet of Britaine; the loadsterre of our language; the notable Rhetore;' adding, though with much confusion of metaphor,—

That made first to distill and raine,  
The gold dew drops of peeche and eloquence,  
Into our tongue through his excellence.

And found the floures first of rethoricke,  
Our rude speech only to enlumine,  
That in our tongue was never none him like:  
For as the sunne doth in heaven shine,  
In midday spere downe to us by line,  
In whose presence no sterre may appeare,  
Right so his ditties withouten any peare.—Lydgate's Troy.



# HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

## CHAP. V.

THE WORKS OF JOHN THE CHAPLAIN, OCCLEVE,  
AND LYDGATE.

THREE Poets of considerable importance to the improvement of the English heroic verse, and to its establishment in our higher style of poetry, distinguished the reign of Henry IV; and the last of these surviving also his successor—John the Chaplain, Occleve, and Lydgate—their works deserve our consideration.

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The first of these is known to us by his translation of Boethius into English verse. Alfred had made an Anglo-Saxon version of it, and Chaucer attempted one in English prose. John aspired to give it a poetical dress, and has completed his task in such a manner, as to prove that he contributed something to the strength and rhythm of our heroic versification. He begins with this address to his patron :—

In suffisaunce of eunnyng and of wyt,  
Default of langage and of eloquence,  
This work fro me schuld have withholden yit,  
Bot that yewre hest hath done me violence :  
That nedis most I do my diligence,  
In thyng that passeth myn abilite ;  
Beseeching to youre noble excellence,  
That be your help it may amended be.

3 Z 2

And

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---

And eertayn I have tasted wonder lyte  
 Al of the welles of Calliope;  
 No wonder though I sympilly endite.  
 Yitt will I not unto Tessiphone,  
 Ne to Alleeto, ne to Megare;  
 Besechin after craft of eloquence.  
 But pray that God of his benignyte  
 My spirit enspire with his influence <sup>1</sup>.

The work contains above 9,000 lines. It is heavy in verse, because its original is so in prose; but it exhibits a greater proportion of good heroic rhythm, sometimes stately and energetic, than Chaucer's poems in this style. There is somewhat of a modern air, both in phrase and metre, in these lines on the Deity, from his preface to the fourth and fifth Books:—

Who wist His wit, when He this world began,  
 Or who was he that was His conseilour?  
 When nothyng was, who was that gaf Hym than,  
 To whom He is in daunger or dettour?  
 Of Hym is all, for He is creatour.  
 Be Hym it is that all thing is susteyned.  
 In Hym is all thing kyndly conteyned.  
 Lo! of so hye a matre for to trete,  
 As after this myn auetour doth pursue,  
 This wote I well, my wyttes ben unmete,  
 The sentence for to sai in metre trewe <sup>2</sup>.

It may be regretted that a writer who had attained at that period such a command of heroic versification, did not select a more interesting subject for the display of his poetical talent.

Another poet, who has not had his just share of reputation, is THOMAS OCCLEVE, whose compositions greatly assisted the growth and diffused the popularity of our infant poetry. He wrote his

<sup>1</sup> MS. Bib. Reg. 18. A 13. Its date, inserted at the end, is 1410. The MS. mentioned by Mr. Todd in his Illustrations, Introd. p. xxxi, has, at the end, the author's

name, 'per Capellanum Johannem Tebaud, alias Watyrbeche.'

<sup>2</sup> MS. Bib. Reg. ib.



his principal poems<sup>3</sup> in the reign of Henry IV. and chiefly for the use of the prince, afterwards Henry V. to whom he addresses them<sup>4</sup>. He calls Chaucer his father and his master, and affectionately and repeatedly laments him<sup>5</sup>. He also notices Gower<sup>6</sup>.

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Occleve frequently applies his poetry to record his feelings, and in so doing gave it a direction to one of its highest sources of excellence. The reader may be pleased to peruse some passages that have never been quoted in the histories of our poetry:—

This ilke nyght I walked to and fro  
Seekyng rest, but certainly she  
Appered not. But thought, my cruel foo  
Chaced had hir and slepe away fro me.

So

<sup>3</sup> They are in MS. in the British Museum, Bib. Reg. 17. D 6. The verses of this author, printed by Mason, are his least interesting productions.

<sup>4</sup> See before, pp. 279, 280. Passages from this author have also been quoted before, pp. 184. 208. 217, 218.

<sup>5</sup> Besides the passages already noticed, he thus mentions both Chaucer and himself:—

‘What shall I call thee? What is thy name?’  
‘OCCLEVE, fader myne! men callen me.’  
‘Occleve, sone!’—‘Y wis, fader, the same.’  
‘Sone! I herd er this men speke of the,  
‘Thou were acqueynted with Chaucer. Parde!  
‘God save his soule.’—MS. 17. D 6.

In another part he calls him

The first fynder of our faire langage.

And exclaims—

Alass! my fader fro the world is go.  
My worthy Maister Chaucer, hym I mene.  
Be thou advocate for hym, Heven Quene!—MS. ib.

He draws his picture on one side of his poem, and invokes the Virgin to favour him—

In thyne honour he wrote full many a stile.  
O now thyne helpe and thy promocioun!  
To God thy sone make a mocion  
How he thy saint was. Maide Marie!  
And lete his soule floure and fructifie.—MS. ib.

<sup>6</sup> In his apostrophe to Death, he adds—

Hast thou not eke Maister Gower slayn?  
Whos vertu I am insufficient  
For to describe - - - MS. ib.

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So longe a nyght ne felt I never none  
 As was that same to my juggement.  
 Who so that thoughty is, he is wo begone.  
 The thoughtful wight is vessell of turment ;  
 There is no grief to hym equipolent.  
 He gravest deppest of sikenesses alle;  
 Full wo is hym that in suche caas is falle.

Passe over whan thys stormy nyght was gone,  
 And day gan at my wyndowe in to prie ;  
 I rose me up ; for bote fonde I none  
 In myne unresty bedde lenger to lie.  
 Into the fields I dressed me on hie,  
 And in my woful hert deepe gan wade,  
 As he that was bareyn of thoughtes glade.

By that I walked hade a certeyn tyme,  
 Were it an houre, I note more-or lesse,  
 A poore, olde, hore man came walkyng by me  
 And seide, ‘ Good day, Sire, and God you blesse.’  
 But I no word—for my sickly distresse  
 Forbade myn eres usen her office.  
 For which this olde man held me lewde and nice.

Stil he toke heede to my dreery cheere,  
 And to my dedely coldness, pale and wan.  
 Than thought he thus. ‘ This man that I see here,  
 All wrong is wreft, by ought that I see kan.’  
 He stert unto me and seide, ‘ Slepest thou man!  
 Awake!’ and he gan me shake wonderfaste,  
 And with a sighe I answered at the laste ;

“ Ah! who is there ?”—‘ I,’—quod the olde grey,  
 ‘ Am here’—and me tolde he the manere,  
 How he spake to me, as ye herd me say.  
 “ O man,” quoth I, “ for Christes love dere,  
 Yf thou wilt ought done at my prayere,  
 Ah! go thy way. Talke to me no more,  
 Thy werdes all anoyeth me full sore.

“ Aroyde



“Avoyde fro me. Me liste no eompanye.  
 Enereee not my grief. I have ynow.”  
 ‘My son, haste thy gode luste, thy sorowe drye,  
 And mayst releevd be’—“What man art thou?”  
 ‘Wreke after me. It shall be for thy prowē.  
 Thou art but yonge and hast but litell seen,  
 And full selde is that yonge folk wise ben<sup>7</sup>.’

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After this introduction, they begin conversing on many subjects of life and manners. Occleve tells him, that the king, Henry iv. had given him an annuity in the exchequer of twenty marcs a year, but he complains that he could not get it paid—

“Myght I ay paide be of that duetee,  
 It shuld stond wel ynough with me.  
 But paiement is hard to gete now adayes,  
 And that me putte in many foule affrays.  
 It goth full strait and sharpe or I it have—  
 This hevieth me, so that I wel nye sterve<sup>8</sup>.”

Occleve then narrates, that he resided in the office of the privy seal; that it was his custom to write there, and that he had been there twenty-four years. He says, that besides his annuity, he had only six marcs a year: he complains that this is full little; and curiously describes how unfit he is to pursue other occupations to increase it:

“Six mark yerely, and no more but that,  
 Fader, to me methynketh is full lite;  
 Consideryng, how that I am not  
 In husbandrie not lerned worth a myte:  
 Scarsly knowe I to chace away the kyte,  
 That me bereve wold my polaile;  
 And more axeth husbondely governaile.  
 “With plough kan I not medle ne with harewe.  
 Ne wote not what lond goode is for what eorne;  
 And for to lade a carte or tille a barewe,  
 To which I never used was aforne,  
 My back unbuxom hathe suche thyng forsworne<sup>9</sup>.”

He

<sup>7</sup> MS. Bib. Reg. 17. D 6.<sup>8</sup> MS. ib.<sup>9</sup> MS. ib.

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He informs his old companion of the peculiar labour which writing is—

“ Many men, fadir, wenen that writyng  
No travaile is. They holde it but a game—

“ A writer mote thre thynges to hym knitte,  
And in tho may be no disseveraunce.  
Mynde, eye, and hond. None may from other flitte,  
But in him mote be joynte continuaunce.  
The mynde all hole, withoute variaunce,  
On eye and honde, awaite mote alway.  
And they two eke. On hym it is no nay.

“ These artificers see I, day by day,  
In the hottest of all her besynesse,  
Talken and syng, and make game and play,  
And forth her labour passeth with gladnesse.  
But we labouren in travaillous stilnesse.  
We stoupe and stare upon the shepe skyn;  
And kepe most our songe and our wordes in <sup>10</sup>.”

The old man's description of his way of living in his youth, may be cited as an interesting picture of the manners of the day:—

‘ Whan I was yonge I was full recheles;  
Proude, nyce and ryotous for the maystrye.  
And amonge other, conscienceless.  
By that sette I not the worth of a flye.  
And of hem haunted I the companye  
That went on pilgimage to taverne,  
Which before unthrift bereth the lanterne.  
‘ Whan folk wel-reuled dressed hem to bedde,  
In tyme due by rede of nature,  
To the taverne quykly I me spedde,  
And pleide at dyce while the night wold endure.  
Thoo myght I spende an hundred mark by yere,  
All thyng quytte, my sone, I gabbe nought.  
I was so proude I hade no man my peere.  
In pride and lecherie was all my thought <sup>11</sup>.’

He

<sup>10</sup> MS. Bib. Reg. 17. D 6.

<sup>11</sup> MS. ib.



He adds a contrast of his present forlorn state:—

‘ Gold, silver, jewell, cloth, beddyng, aray—  
 Ne have I none other than thow maist see.  
 Parde. This olde russett is not gay.  
 And in my purs so grete sommes be  
 That there nys counter in all Cristente.

‘ Come hedre, my sone, and loke whether  
 In this purs there be ony crosse or crouche.  
 Save nedle and threde and thymell of lether,  
 Here seest thou nought that man may handell or touche.  
 The fiende, men sayn, may hoppe in a pouche  
 Whan that no crosse therein may appear;  
 And by my purs the same ye may sey here—

‘ And where ben my gownes of scarlet;  
 Sangewyn, murrey, and blewes sadde and light.  
 Grenes also and the faire vyolet—  
 Hors and harneys fressh and lusty in sight  
 My wikked lyfe hath putte all this to flight <sup>12</sup>.’

From Occleve’s account, in another work, of his youthful prodigality, it may be suspected that the account of the old man’s youth was in fact the description of his own. His poem on Government was written for the instruction of Henry V. when he was a prince. His tales are not unworthy of notice.

LYDGATE, a monk of the Benedictine abbey at Bury, is another of our ancient poets who has been oftener abused than read. As voluminous as Don Lopez de Vega, and often as dull as his worst-natured critics have not been displeased to find him; yet he abounds with passages that are either curious for their relation of manners, or for their true poetical feeling, or for the vigour and harmony of their versification. In this latter quality he is superior to Chaucer, and sometimes approaches him in his higher

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<sup>12</sup> MS. Bib. Reg. 17. D 6. Some other Mr. Mason in 1796, who calls him, from poems of this author have been published by the spelling in his MS. ‘Hoccleve.’

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higher merit<sup>13</sup>. He has not Chaucer's felicity in selecting, nor his facility or spirit in describing, the characterising traits of the events which he exhibits; but he has sometimes a greater condensation of expression, if not of thought, and in general better rhythm in his versification.

One of the passages that deserve to be cited from Lydgate, from its connexion with the manners of the age, is the poet's description of his own youth, in his Testament<sup>14</sup>. In the prologue to his 'Storie

<sup>13</sup> Lydgate was not born later than 1375, and he lived above fifty years. The most complete enumeration of his works is in Mr. Ritson's *Bibliotheca Poetica*, as well as the most angry abuse of him. That he was a monk, was a sin great enough to excite the bile of this irritable, but valuable antiquary.

<sup>14</sup> This picture of himself has hitherto escaped notice:—

Voyde of reason; gyven to wilfulnes,  
Frowarde to vertue; of Christ gave letell hede.  
Loth to lerne; lovede no vertuous besynes,  
Save play or myrth. Straunge to spell or rede;  
Folowyng all appetitis longyng to childhede;  
Lightlye tournynge; wild and selde sadde;  
Wepinge for nought and anone after gladde.  
For lytel werth to stryve with my felawe,  
As my passyons dyd my brydell lede;  
Of the yarde stode I sometyme in awe;  
To be scoured that was all my drede.  
Lothe toworde scole; lost my time indede;  
Lyke a yonge colt thot raune without bridell,  
Made my frendes gyve goode to spende in ydell.  
I had in custom to come to scole late;  
Not for to lerne but for a countenaunce.  
With my felawes redy to debate;  
To jangle and jape was sett all my pleasaunce.  
Wherof rebuked this was my cheusaunce,  
'To forge a lesynge and thereupon to muse  
Whan I trespassed myself to excuse.  
To my better dyd no reverence,  
Of my soveraynes gave no force at all,  
Well obstynate by inobedience;  
Ranne into gardeyns, appels there I stale,  
To gather frutes spared hedge nor wall;  
To plucke grapes on other mennys vynes,  
Was more redy than for to saye mattynes.

My



‘Storie of Thebes,’ he briefly delineates himself in his maturer age<sup>15</sup>. His ‘Siege of Troy,’ he says, he began at the command of Henry V. in the last year of his father’s reign, or in 1413; and

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My lust was alway to scorne folke and gape,  
Shrewede tournes ever amonge to use.  
To scoffe and mowe like a wanton ape  
Whan I dyd evyll other I dyd abuse.  
Redyer cheristones for to tell  
Than go to church or here the sacrynge bell.  
Lothe to ryse, lother to bed at eve;  
With unwashe hondes redy to dyner,  
My paternoster, my crede or my beleve  
Last at the looke. Lo this was my maner,  
Warred with ech wynde as doth a rede spere.  
Snobbed of my frendes such tatches to amende,  
Made deffe eare—list not to them attende.—  
My port; my pase; my fote alway unstable;  
My loke; myn eyen unsure and vacabounde.  
In all my werkes sodeynly chaungeable.  
To all goode thewes contrary was I founde.  
Now oversad; now mourning; now jocounde.  
Wilful; recheles; madd; startyng as an hare;  
To folowe my luste, for no thyng wolde I spare.

Lydg. Test. MS. Bib. Reg. 18. D 11.

<sup>15</sup> He says he travelled to visit the town—

In a cosse of blacke and not of grene,  
On a palfray slender, long slene  
With rusty bridle made not for the sale;  
My man to foine with a void male.

He went “by fortune” to the inn where Chaucer’s pilgrims had lodged: The host there addresses him with

‘Ye be welcome newly into Kent  
Thogh your bridle have nother hoos ne bell.  
Beseeching you, that ye will tell  
First of your name and what countre  
Without more, shortly, that ye be  
That looke so pale, all devoid of blood.  
Upon your head a wonder threadbare hood  
Well arrayed for to ride late.’  
I answered,  
- - - “My name was Lidgate  
Monke of Burie, nie fifty yeare of age.”

Prol. Siege of Thebes.

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he completed it in 1420<sup>16</sup>. Some lines in this poem shew that criticism had begun; for he expresses great sensibility about it, and solicits candour and favourable judgment. He remarks that Chaucer did not suffer it to disturb him, but pursued his compositions, saying always his best<sup>17</sup>. It is also obvious that the public ear was in his time becoming scrupulous as to the correct metre of heroic verse, for he attempts an apology for his own defects on this point<sup>18</sup>. A few extracts from his *Storie of Thebes* will shew his style and power of poetical narration.

He thus describes a battle:—

As Greekes pressen to enter the cite,  
They of Thebes in her crueltie  
With hem mette, full furious and wood.  
And mortally as they againe hem stood,  
Men might see speres shiver asonder;  
That to behold, it was a very wonder  
How they foine with daggers and with swerdes:  
Thorough the viser ayming at berds,  
Persing also through the round mailles;  
Rent out peeces of her aventailles,  
That nought availeth the mighty Gesseran,  
Through neek and breast that the speres ran.  
Her weapons were so sharpe ground and whet,  
In their armour that they were not let.  
For ther lay one troden under foot,  
And yonder one perced to the heart root.  
Here lieth one dead and there another lame.  
This was the play and the mortall game,

Atweene

---

<sup>16</sup> Lydgate's *Siege of Troy*.

<sup>17</sup> My Master Chaucer that founde ful many spot,  
Hym lyste not gruche, nor pynche at every blot:  
Nor move himself to parturbe his reste;  
I have herde tolde, bot seyde alway the beste.—Lydg. *Troy*.

<sup>18</sup> For well I wote, moche thinge is wronge;  
Falsly metrede, both of short and longe.—Ib.



Atweene Thebans and the Greekes proud ;  
 That the swoughs and the cries loud  
 Of hem that lay and yolden up the ghost,  
 Was heard full ferre about in many a cost <sup>19</sup>.

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He sometimes expresses his sentiments with a high and dignified feeling :—

And they that were most manly and wise,  
 Shortly saied it were a cowardise,  
 The high emprise that they have undertake,  
 For dred of death so sodainly to forsake.  
 It were to hem perpetually a shame,  
 And after hindring to the Greke's name.  
 And better it were to every warreour,  
 Manly to die with worship and honour,  
 Than like a coward with the life endure.  
 For ones shamed, hard is to recure  
 His name ayein, of what estate he bee <sup>20</sup>.

His picture of the besieged Thebans and of their surrounding enemies, has some spirit :—

Men of armes all the night walking  
 On the walles, by bidding of the king,  
 Lest there were traine or treason.  
 And on the toures and in the chief dongcon,  
 He set men to make mortalle sownes,  
 With brasen hornes and loud clariounes.  
 Of full entent the watches for to kepe,  
 In his warde that no man ne slepe.  
 And Grekes proudly all the long night  
 Kindled fires and made full great light <sup>21</sup>.

He thus represents a knight and a serpent :—


The worthy knight Parthonolope  
 Was the first that happed for to se  
 This hideous serpent by a river side ;  
 Great and horrible, sterne and full of pride ;

Under

<sup>19</sup> Siege of Thebes, Speght's ed. p. 373.

<sup>20</sup> Ib. p. 372.

<sup>21</sup> Ib. p. 370.

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Under a rocke by a banke lowe.  
And in all hast he bent a sturdy bowe,  
And therein set an arrow filed kene,  
And through the body spotted blewe and grene,  
Full mightily he made it for to glide <sup>22</sup>.

News was brought to Lygurgus, that his son was killed—

- - - - Sodainly the importable smart  
Ran anon and hent him by the hart—  
The rage gan mine on him so depe,  
That he could not but sobbe sigh and wepe.  
And with the noise and lamentacioun,  
The quene distraught is descended down.  
And when she knew the ground of all this sorrow,  
It needed her no teares for to borrow.  
But twenty time upon a row  
Aswound she fell to the earth low.  
And stoundmell for this mischaunce,  
Still as a stone she lieth in a traunce.  
But when the child into court was brought  
Tofore Lygurgus—alass—I wite hem nought  
Upon the corps, with a mortal face  
He felt at ones and gan it to embrace  
Sore to grispe and agein up stert <sup>23</sup>.

He gives a new circumstance in his description of the sufferings  
of the army of Tydeus, from thirst:—

They nother found well ne rivere  
Hem to refresh, nor water that was clere;  
That they alas no refute ne conne,  
So importable was the shene sonne.  
So hote on hem in foulds where they ley,  
That for mischeefe men and horse they dey;  
Gaping full dry upward into the south;  
And some putten her swerdes in her mouth,  
And speare heads, in story as it is told,  
T' assuage her thirst with the yron cold <sup>24</sup>.

Forgetting

<sup>22</sup> Siege of Thebes, Speght's ed. p. 369.

<sup>23</sup> Ib. p. 369.

<sup>24</sup> Ib. p. 367.



Forgetting all chronology, he makes Etheocles plant the walls with cannon : CHAP. V.

Round about he set many gonnes  
Great and small and some large as tonnes.

Tydeus, wounded, enters a garden ; and there

He laied him downe for to make his rest—  
There he lay till the larke song  
With notes new, high up in the aire ;  
The glad morrow rodie, and right faire ;  
Phebus also casting up his beames,  
The high hils gilt with his streames ;  
The silver dew upon the hearbes round <sup>25</sup>.

Lydgate now introduces the princess :—

And every morrow, for holesomnes of aire,  
Ligurgus doughter did make her repaire  
Of custome aye emong the floures new,  
In the garden of many a divers hew ;  
Such joy had she for to take hede,  
On her stalkes for to seene hem sprede,  
In the alures walking to and fro.  
And when she had a little while go,  
Her selfe alone casting up her sight,  
She beheld where an armed knight  
Lay to rest him on the hearbes cold ;  
And him beside she gan eke behold  
His mighty stede walking here and there <sup>26</sup>.

Her approach to Tydeus is picturesque—


And forth she goeth and touchest him soft  
Where as he lay, with her honds smale ;  
And with a face deadly bleike and pale,  
Liche as a man adawed in a swough,  
He up stert and his swerde drough,  
Not fully out, but put it up aycine  
Anone as he hath the lady seine <sup>27</sup>.

His

<sup>25</sup> Siege of Thebes, Speght's ed. p. 364.

<sup>26</sup> Ib.

<sup>27</sup> Ib.

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His description of Tydeus, affronted with the address of Etheocles, is very characteristic:—

When Tideus had his message saied—  
As he that list no lenger there sojourne,  
Fro the king he gan his faee tourne,  
Not astonied, nor in his heart aferde,  
But full proudly layed hond on his swerde :  
And in despite who was lefe or loth,  
A sterne pae through the hall he goth  
Through the court, and manly toke his stede <sup>25</sup>.

That Lydgate's Thebes and Troy are generally dull, is perhaps more the fault of the poet's subjects than of his talent. In these, he has entered those mythological regions, in which all modern poets, as well as their readers, invariably contract a fatal lethargy. The classical writers of Greece and Rome having given to this obsolete period definite characters and manners, fancy finds itself circumscribed. The most attainable beauties have been anticipated. Modern genius can only imitate and translate. Every incident comes to us with the wearisomeness of a thrice-told tale. Every character reminds us of superior pictures with which in our juvenile studies we have been delighted and preoccupied. Our prejudice combines with our taste to dwell with rapture on our first impressions, and to dislike beforehand the author, who must either copy or distort them. Chaucer has made Troilus interesting only by forgetting the Trojan, and making him a loving knight of the court of Edward the Third. But even Chaucer cannot reconcile us to absurdity. Lydgate has erred in the same manner: and hence the admired Cresseid of his master, as well as his own Destruction of Troy and Siege of Thebes, will perhaps hereafter live only in the pages of the historian, or on the shelves of the antiquary.

Of

<sup>25</sup> Siege of Thebes, p. 363. Mr. Warton's account of Lydgate deserves perusal and praise.



Of the Scottish bards about this period, Andrew of Wyntoun<sup>29</sup>, James the First<sup>30</sup>, Henry the Minstrel<sup>31</sup>, and the elegant William Dunbar<sup>32</sup>, deserve and will reward the perusal of the curious.

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On quitting this interesting branch of our subject, we may remark, that to the poets who have been enumerated in these pages, we are indebted for the superior character of our national poetry. They formed its versification and its style. They trained the English mind to love its vernacular Muses, and to cultivate them. They pointed out the most interesting regions for their excursions, and opened some of the treasures that were attainable. They soon produced an emulous crowd of admirers and imitators. Mind rapidly catches fire from mind, and spreads the useful flame wherever communication can reach. Nature having implanted in the human breast, not only a preferring taste for excellence the moment it becomes visible, but also an insuppressible desire for something better than what we actually enjoy, no species of intellectual improvement can be stationary ; it may migrate, but it is indestructible. Sensual habits, or brutish polities, may drive it from any one community, as they have from Athens and Alexandria ; but it moves, to flourish with more abundant vigour in

newer

<sup>29</sup> He flourished about 1400. His 'Ory-gynale Cronykel of Scotland' was published in 1795, by Mr. Macpherson.

<sup>30</sup> See his elegant 'King's Quaire,' in Ellis's Specimens, vol. 1. p. 299. He was born 1395.

<sup>31</sup> Or 'Blind Harry.' He wrote, about 1446, the Metrical History of Sir William Wallace, containing much fable, but also occasionally some true poetry. It was printed at Perth 1790.

<sup>32</sup> "The greatest poet that Scotland ever produced," was born about 1365. See Ellis, p. 377. In this sketch of the History of our Poetry, I have purposely avoided all minute details and discussions, and whatever

preceding writers have published. My object has been to select, as far as I could, such circumstances and passages, which, not having yet been quoted or observed, may be new to the general reader, and may at the same time satisfactorily mark the course and progress of the poetical mind of the country. By this plan, I endeavour to avoid repeating to the public what it already possesses, and to give a more connected and concise view of the principal features of our poetical history. To the intelligent and laborious antiquaries and inquirers who have preceded me on this subject, I refer the reader for fuller circumstantial detail.

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newer soils. Not that every country is alike adapted to its vegetation. But England, from her happy political constitution, has always been a region congenial to the growth of every intellectual good. Hence poetry and literature, from their first buddings in our islands, have never ceased to advance, and are still in their progress. It would be a violence to our nature to make them retrograde. We all feel that no possessed luxury, of either the mind or the body, can satisfy us. The acquisition of one comfort, either in life or literature, is but a stimulus to obtain others. The demand for excellence increases with its attainment. Whatever progress we may make, our censorial judgments of each other require us to become something still better, or reproach us for the defects which we do not remove. Our literary, like our moral critics, are never wholly satisfied. The brighter parts of the most successful writer, like the greater virtues of the best public character, make the watching world less tolerant of his imperfections, and more discriminating as to their existence. We pardon fewer faults, that is, we exact more continued merit, than our ancestors were contented with. The satirized censoriousness and restlessness of man are indications of the homage which he pays to that ideal beauty, to that ideal good, which, though he never finds, he cannot forbear to search for. All that we acquire, becomes inferior to our wish; we believe it to be unequal to our powers of attaining. The capacity of every man exceeds his success, both in his own opinion and in that of his critics, and also of his legislators; for no laws are made, either in political or literary parliaments, but with the belief that they can, as well as ought, to be obeyed. But the truth is, that every improvement makes further improvement more necessary, as well as more delightful and accessible. With all Shakespear's or Milton's constellations of merit, we cannot limit our poetical banquet to their productions.

As



As Chaucer became dissatisfied with Gower, and twice, at least, censures him<sup>33</sup>, we have long since become dissatisfied with Chaucer ; and by the aid of the very lights which they have given us, we have passed far beyond both. Man is so constituted as to be discontented with every good and every merit that he possesses, in order that he may be constantly increasing them. The spell of dissatisfaction is placed upon the human heart, that no inferior excellence, no present advantage, may content an intellect, which is created to be a candidate for companionship with absolute perfection. By the operation of this law of our mortal nature, our faculties are always on the advance. Hence, rich and varied as our Parnassus has become, and beautiful and sublime as are many of its productions, they are but the pledges of a still nobler vegetation, of a still superior culture. If the mind cannot be stationary, how can its works fail to partake of its progression ?

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<sup>33</sup> In the Prologue to his Testament of Love, p. 466 ; and in the Man of Lawe's Prologue, p. 36.

# HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

## PART VI. HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND PROSE COMPOSITION.

### CHAP. I.

#### PROGRESS OF THE TRANSITION FROM THE ANGLO- SAXON TO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

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THE Roman conquest of Britain did not extirpate its ancient tongue; some Latin words became incorporated with the body of the language; but the people still spoke their ancient British<sup>1</sup>. The wars between them and the Romans were fierce, but short; the mass of the population suffered little in the contest; and the Britons submitted before any consumption of their numbers had occurred, that was sufficient to destroy their vernacular speech<sup>2</sup>.

The

<sup>1</sup> In the poems of Taliesin many Latin words are actually interwoven; as in his *Kanu y Medd* — ‘*Lleaws Creadur a fag terra.*’ *Welsh Archaïol.* p. 22. In the *Llath Moessen*, ‘*a Duw Reen rex meneifon.*’ p. 42. In the *Kerdd an Vab Lleir*, ‘*Gwyddyl a Brythan a Rhomane.*’ p. 67. In the *Yrymes Dyddbrawd*, ‘*Deus Duw delwad.*’ p. 83. In the *Yr Awdyl vraith*, we have *femina*, *homicida*, p. 93; *misericordia*, *federa*, *Sabrina*, p. 94; and *ultima*, p. 95. So in the *Divregw-*

*awd Taliesin*, and elsewhere, there are added to his Welsh many Latin words. Many Latin words with British terminations may be traced in the present Cambrian language; which, as the Welsh were never a very learned people, may be referred more probably to the Roman residence in Britain, than to the studies of its inhabitants.

<sup>2</sup> The Cornish differs from the Welsh only as a dialect. The *Bas Bretagne* was originally the same; but the people who spoke



The invasions of the Anglo-Saxons were more sanguinary and desolating. Their numbers never being formidable enough to intimidate opposition, or to subdue it by a blow, the natives every where struggled against them with perpetual hope and perpetual destruction. The Angles and Saxons eagerly flocked in successive colonies into the island, till some of their ancient seats on the Continent were deserted, and England became overspread with an Anglo-Saxon population. Such were their numbers, and such was the consumption of the ancient Britons, that from the firth of Forth to the coasts of Kent and Suffolk, the British language disappeared, except from Wales, the peninsula of Cornwall, and a small district in Cumberland. All the rest of the island, from the Scottish firths, had no other language than the Saxon; and this was so completely established in every part, at least of England, that the names of its fields, boundaries, villages, and towns, became almost universally Saxon; and as such all the grants of land are described in the numerous Saxon charters which still exist.

As the Danish invasions were prevented by the exertions of Alfred from overpowering the Anglo-Saxon nation, they did not change its language; but their numerous settlers in Northumbria and East Anglia left some verbal effects. Even the dynasty of Canute made no material alteration of the Anglo-Saxon tongue. Danish may have been the fashion of the court under that sovereign and his two sons; but the reign of Edward the Confessor restored the predominance of the Saxon; and when the Normans entered the island, the Anglo-Saxon was its vernacular speech.

The fury and perseverance of the revolts of the English against William and his followers, produced in the Norman mind an abhorrence

spoke it having emigrated from Britain many centuries ago, and having undergone several vicissitudes of fortune, it now exhibits great diversities. And yet, when we attacked

St. Malo in the reign of George II. it was stated that the Welsh and the Bretons understood each others conversations.

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abhorrence of both the people of England and their language. William had at first endeavoured to learn the Saxon<sup>3</sup>, but his age and occupations interfered with his desire; and the English continuing through the largest portion of his reign to shew themselves his bitter and implacable enemies, he banished their language from his legislation, from his palace, and courts of law. His Norman nobility and prelates equally disclaimed it; and even in all the public schools it was discountenanced, and the grammar was taught in Norman French<sup>4</sup>. The consequence was, that, from the Conqueror to Edward the Third, the Norman French was the language of the court, the great, the upper clergy, and the law, and, during the first reigns after the Conquest, of all the literature of the nation that was not in Latin.

The Roman conquest of Gaul had been as destructive to its native languages, as the Anglo-Saxon victories to that of England. The Latin language and literature spread over the country; in some parts cultivated so much as to rival Rome itself; and it had become so firmly established in the minds and habits of the natives, that when the Franks subjected it to their empire, they were unable to give their language a national preponderance. Charlemagne, and his son and grandsons, spoke the Franco-Theotisc, a branch of the great Gothic tree, which had rooted its seeds from the Rhine to the Vistula. But in the tenth century, that mixed language, which we call Norman French, had become the language of the larger part of France; while its kindred tongue, the

<sup>3</sup> Hist. England, vol. i. p. 81. This effort for acquiring popularity may account for some of his precepts being in Anglo-Saxon.

<sup>4</sup> Hist. Ingulf. p. 70.—The Anglo-Saxon hand-writing, which, after the reign of Alfred, had given way to the fashion introduced in his reign of the less readable French hand,

was disliked and disused by all the Norman-French. Ib. p. 85. In 1091, the Anglo-Saxon writing had become so obsolete, that only a few old men could read it. Ingulf directed some young men to be taught it, that his monks might be able to read, and defend their charters against all assailants. Ib. p. 98.



the Provençal, became established in its southern districts, where it still survives <sup>5</sup>.

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The Northmen who settled under Rollo in Normandy, lost, within a century, their Scandinavian tongue, and adopted the Gallic. This rapid change may have been occasioned by the settlers whom Rollo invited into his dominions; by the marriages of his Northmen with French women, who communicated their language to their children; and by the French clergy, who became the religious and literary instructors of his countrymen and their ruling ecclesiastics. Hence, while their neighbours the Bas-Bretons, more national, and at the same time less social and civilized, kept apart from the natives of the Continent where they settled, and thereby preserved their ancient tongue in the districts they occupied, the Normans willingly abandoned their barbarous Runic for the cultivated French, to the great advantage of their intellectual cultivation.


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In the review of the structure and mechanism of the Anglo-Saxon language, printed in a preceding Work, the principles were explained on which it appeared to have been formed. This explanation was founded on Mr. Tooke's *Diversions of Purley*, with several extensions and modifications suggested by a careful inspection of our ancient tongue. As these principles have been stated at some length in the Work referred to, it will be superfluous to repeat them here <sup>6</sup>.

The conversion of nouns-substantive into verbs and adjectives, and of all these into adverbs; the formation of the articles; the abbreviation of some of the verbs into conjunctions, prepositions, and interjections; the application of some nouns also to the same purpose; and the composition of new sets of derivative substantives,

<sup>5</sup> See the Provençal tale and poetry, published in 'Le Troubadour,' by Fabre d'Olivet, Paris 1803, who speaks of himself as having

learnt the language from the lips of his mother - - - - <sup>6</sup> See History of the Anglo-Saxons, in its last book and chapters.

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stantives, verbs, adjectives, and other particles, from primitive ones; are among the most curious parts of the history of language. We have remarked how much the Anglo-Saxon language illustrates this progress in itself. But they are only to be inferred from the state in which it now appears: we have no history of the actual process which it has undergone. When the Anglo-Saxons came into England, they came with their language abundantly organized in these respects. They had been a busy and an active people for some centuries before the first written document of their language, that has descended to us, was composed. In all tongues, the main abbreviations and forms of language seem to have been made in the daily intercourse and business of life, before literature began. Language rather shapes literature, than literature language. The busy world creates the phrases, which the student uses. Writers may prune and polish them, and sometimes multiply; but they never improve language in its forming stages, so much as the active, talking public, ever thinking and discoursing, though rarely composing.

In our present account of the history of the English language, we have therefore not to account for its primitive formation. Our duty will be to describe its transition from the Anglo-Saxon, which has become a dead language, to the ancient English of the fourteenth century; which, though not actually our living tongue, yet is so much like it, that, with a small degree of attention, we may read and understand Wickliffe's New Testament<sup>7</sup>, nearly as well as our common one. His other English, indeed, is not quite so perspicuous; but if we may judge from his Latin Trialogus, we may believe that our venerable reformer was more illustrious for the strength of his head and the justness of his ideas, than for the force

<sup>7</sup> Mr. Baber's republication of this translation, in 1810, is an acceptable work. He has made it more valuable by his Life of

Wickliffe, and a fuller catalogue of his works than I have elsewhere seen.



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force or lucidity of his style. The scholastic studies, though they exercised the mind, yet, being conversant with words, not things, darkened its language. Thomas Aquinas has the rare merit of combining great perspicuity and purity of expression with all the refined distinctions and speculations of the schoolman, while Peter Lombard and Duns Scotus are obscure. Wickliffe, like them, is neither classical in his Latin, nor clear or vigorous in his usual elocution. His English partakes of the imperfection of his Latin diction, in all his works but the Scriptures, and there the unrivalled combination of force, simplicity, dignity, and feeling in the original, compel his old English, as they seem to do every other language into which they are translated, to be clear, interesting, and energetic<sup>8</sup>.

A position of their words out of the natural order of their meaning, and thus delaying unnecessarily their comprehension, was the habit of the Anglo-Saxon writers. The first beauty of language is to communicate the thought correctly; the next, to convey every part of it as rapidly, as the mind that hears can comprehend it. But the latter effect is prevented, and the former frequently confused, in every language, in which the words do not follow each other, in the natural stream of the thought. The Latin language is as defective in this point as the Anglo-Saxon. The Romans, like their Spartan ancestors, disdained the grace of easy comprehension. As the natives of Lacedæmon affected an artificial brevity, the Romans adopted that unnatural dislocation of their words, which

<sup>8</sup> There is something remarkable in the composition of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, that although in every language they are the easiest book to a learner, they are yet dignified, interesting, and impressive. The Pentateuch, Psalms, and Gospels, unite, in a singular degree, simplicity and perspicuity, with force, energy, and pathos. I can-

not satisfy myself what the literary peculiarities, the felicities of language, are, which make them so universally comprehensible, and yet avoid insipidity, feebleness and tedium; which display so often such genuine eloquence and majesty; and yet are neither affected nor elaborate, nor, in general, above the understanding of the commonest reader.

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which constitutes their classical composition—an arbitrary habit, which sometimes may contribute to rhetorical euphony, but which makes the construction difficult to learners, and always retards and frequently obscures the intelligibility of the sentence. In the Anglo-Saxon, the same practice, but without the rhythmical effect, and with no selection for any purpose of strength or beauty, perpetually occurs. Sometimes the comparative adjective is postponed, sometimes the superlative<sup>9</sup>, and sometimes the verb<sup>10</sup>; even twice in the same sentence<sup>11</sup>. If two verbs occur, the auxiliary, which ought to have preceded, is placed last<sup>12</sup>. Sometimes the verb is advanced, and its nominative cases are thrown back<sup>13</sup>. The auxiliary verb is often separated from its participle by intervening expressions, and the sentence is ended with the participle<sup>14</sup>; and of two connected substantives, the genitive case first occurs, and the governing noun is postponed<sup>15</sup>. These instances are sufficient to shew the peculiar and artificial style of the Anglo-Saxon prose, which occasions its humble meaning to linger with a drawling insipidity, making that which is always feeble still feebler, and diminishing its perspicuity<sup>16</sup>.

Another

<sup>9</sup> As—Thysum swithe gelic; To these very like—So—Men tha leofeastan; Men the dearest. Saxon Homily, ap. Wanley Catal. p. 1 & 7.—The following are taken from one page of Wanley, to shew how habitual these peculiarities were.

<sup>10</sup> Tha him lareowas seegan.  
Syththan he to thysum life com.  
We sceolon urne scyppend lufian.

Then to him teachers say.  
Since he to this life came.  
We should our maker love.

Wanley, *ib.* p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Tha wolde God hi fordon; Then would God them destroy.—Wanl. *ib.*

<sup>12</sup> Tha man for nytennesse misforan ne sceolon.

<sup>13</sup> 7 feollan cyrcan and hus and comon wilde beran and wulfan.—Gelamp on anre byrig, the Vigerna is gecweden, micel eorhstyring.

<sup>14</sup> Thæs cyninges botl wearth, mid heofendlicum fyre, forbærned.

<sup>15</sup> 7 abitan thæs folces miccelue dæl.—Tha bead se biscop Mamertus threora daga fæsten.

<sup>16</sup> In all the Saxon prose authors we find this inversion. Thus in the Saxon Homily printed by Elstob: “Indeed after of this pope the death—Then might not so yet the Roman city without a pope continue: But all the people the blessed Gregory to that distinction, unanimously chose.” p. 19. So the Saxon prayers in the Cotton Library, Julius



Another pervading character, was the use, and the inflection into cases, of the two articles, *the* and *a*<sup>17</sup>—also of its pronouns<sup>18</sup>; and the partial conjugation of its verbs, especially in the imperfect tense<sup>19</sup>. To this we may add its invariable use of inflections for the genitive case, both in the singular and in the plural<sup>20</sup>. If we also recollect its uniform expression of our ‘with’ by its ‘mid,’ and the application of its ‘with’ to signify ‘against’—its use of *mycel* for *much*; *swithe* for *very*; *swa swa* for *so as*; *se* for *he* and *the* and *that*; and *heo* for *she*; *hem* for *them*; *heora* for *their*; and *ure* for *our*—and that our substantives in *ness* are usually *nysse* in Saxon; and our adverbs ending in *ly*, are terminated in *lice* by our ancestors<sup>21</sup>—if we keep these few characterizing circumstances in memory, though they are not the whole of the peculiarities of the Anglo-Saxon, we shall be able to form some idea of the Anglo-Saxon style, and to understand some of the leading points of the changes which marked its transition into our present English.

The Anglo-Saxon syntax was also singularly anomalous and disorderly. Its prepositions were used as if possessed of the power of

Julius A 2. printed at the end of Cedmon: “Oh of light, the light! Oh, of life, the joy—Oh Lord loved, I know my soul with sins is wounded—Of heaven, Lord—Of life the governor, &c. So in the Saxon Liber Medicinalis, in the Bodleian Lib.: “Of Ægypt the king, Idpartus was called. To Octavianus the Cegar his friend health he prayed. In these words thus saying. In many concerns I am wise.” Wanley Catal. p. 75. Our royal Alfred equally uses it: “This message, Augustin over the salt sea from the South brought.—I desired my true friends that they to me from of God the books on of holy men the manners and the wonders would write the following instruction.” Ib. pp. 70, 71. The above is the Saxon translated.

<sup>17</sup> Thus of the definite article, which was certainly taken from the pronoun of their

third person, we have the inflections—Se bisceop—to *there* byrig—*tham* folce—*thone* hlaf.—And their article *an*, to express a thing, which is the numeral *one* turned into an article, is declined into—*an* anginn—*anre* byrig—*anum* witegan.

<sup>18</sup> The first person will serve as an example—Ic, I—We, we.

<sup>19</sup> See Hickes’ and Lye’s Saxon Grammars.

<sup>20</sup> Thus in Cedmon we never have *of* for the genitive, but always an inflection of the governed noun, as—*rodera* weard; *wereda* wuldor; *wuldres* bearnum; *engla* threatas; *heofena* rices, &c. p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> Every Saxon work contains instances of all these circumstances.

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of altering the cases of the nouns they governed, as our schoolboys know occurs in the Latin and Greek; but so irregular and capricious were the principles of this government, that in the same sentence the same preposition throws its connected substantives into four different cases<sup>22</sup>. To the confusion of all regular grammar, almost all its prepositions have this inconceivable power<sup>23</sup>. With not less perversity, we find plural adjectives to singular substantives<sup>24</sup>. Sometimes the article and the adjective is inflected, and not the substantive<sup>25</sup>; and sometimes neither the article nor the substantive, but only the adjective<sup>26</sup>. That the substantive should agree with the adjective in either case<sup>27</sup> or number<sup>28</sup>, seems to have been quite a matter of chance; and whether nouns should be inflected at all, or into what case, was a question which no fixed rule appears to have decided<sup>29</sup>.

That amid this confusion of grammar our worthy ancestors should have always correctly understood each other, may be reasonably doubted. The use of anomalies in language may be so uniform as to give the irregularity a definite meaning; and then, although

<sup>22</sup> Mid ealre thinre heortan and mid eallum mode. MS. Hom. Wanley, p. 2.

<sup>23</sup> As *on*—on bocum; on thone timan; on anre byrig; on tham ærran bebode. Also *to*—to thære byrig; to anum witegan—to sumum lareowe. Also *be*—be tham hehstan bode; be hem sylfum; be sumes mannes.—Also *with*—mid heora behreowsunga; mid fæder and halgum gaste; mid micelre gymene. MS. Sax. Wanley, pp. 1—3.

<sup>24</sup> Eallum mode—sumum lareowe—heofondlicum fyre. Ib.

<sup>25</sup> On tham ærran bebode. Ib.

<sup>26</sup> Tha godspellican lare. Ib.

<sup>27</sup> Hence we have, Thæs heofonlican rices and heofonlican fæder—on thisum dægtherlicum godspelle:—As well as, geleafullum mannum. Ib. p. 3.

<sup>28</sup> On thisum andweardum dæge—æfter

thysum frecenfullum life—on anum westenne. Though we have also, æfter twam dagum, &c. Ib. pp. 4 & 5.

<sup>29</sup> Thus, to instance the word apostle, sometimes it is declined and sometimes not: We have, se apostol; thone apostol; tham apostole; tham apostolum; his apostola; meran apostole; his apostolum; be apostolum; his apostolas; thæs apostoles, &c. Wanley, pp. 4—8. So a confusion of cases occur on the word dæg, a day. We find, on tham dæge; on thone dæge; on tham dagas; on thesse dæg; on thissum dagum; on thissum dæge; on thesse dæge; thisne dæg; on Domes-dæge; on domes-dæg; on tham forme dæge; on thære forman dæge; on midne dæg; on thone Wodnesdæg; on thæm ærran dæge. MS. ap. Wanley, pp. 14. 32, 33. 20. 19. 18. 22. 36, 37. 47. 49. 52. 57.



although more troublesome to learn, yet, when learnt, they are as intelligible as regular conjugations. But the Saxon anomalies of grammar seem to have been so capricious and so confused, that their meaning must have been often rather conjectured than actually understood: and hence it is, that their poetry, especially in *Beowulf*, is often so unintelligible to us. There is no settled grammar to guarantee the meaning; we cannot guess so well nor so rapidly as they, who, talking every day in the same phrases, were familiar with their own absurdities. Or perhaps when the harper recited, they often caught his meaning from his gesticulation—felt it when they did not understand it—and thought his obscurity to be the result of superior ability.

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One natural consequence of these disorderly combinations of the inflections of the Anglo-Saxon language, was their gradual disuse. The confusion to which they led, could only be avoided by their ceasing to be significant. Becoming individually insignificant, their multiplicity was found inconvenient: the larger part were entirely dropped, and only those few were retained, of a determinate form and application, which our modern language still exhibits.

One of the first observable steps in the formation of English out of Saxon, was the discontinuance of the Anglo-Saxon inversions, and the use of a simple and more natural order of phrase. We are indebted to the Anglo-Normans for this improvement. Whether they were at first a duller people, who could not comprehend what was not plain and easy; or whether their ignorance of all literature occasioned them to adopt unconsciously a simple and natural style; or whether a superior acuteness led them instinctively to a better taste, in preference to the elaborate absurdities about them; yet it is certain that the Anglo-Norman writers are remarkable for their unaffected, plain, and comprehensible diction.

Their

Their words are usually placed as nature and meaning would station them; and they taught the Anglo-Saxons to untwist their phrases, to dismount from their incumbering stilts, and to think and speak as simply and as perspicuously as themselves.

As the Anglo-Saxon began to be affected by the Norman tongue, many other changes followed. The declensions of the definite article, *se, seo, that*—were wholly laid aside; and its plural nominative, *tha*, changed into *the*, became universally used for every case, gender, and number. The simplification of a word so generally and incessantly wanted, seems to have been a great improvement.

The disuse of declensions in the substantives and adjectives, excepting in the genitive case, and one variation for the plural, was another alteration, also beneficial. The abolition of the terminal cases makes the language less monotonous, more simple, more pliable, and more precise<sup>50</sup>. Language only needs such inflections, when, as in the Latin, its words are unnaturally placed; and on the other hand, the dislocated position becomes a necessary evil when declensions are used, that a disagreeable monotony may be avoided.

The dual was also dropped in Saxon, as it is in Latin. It is retained in Greek; but it seems to be a distinction not wanted for any practical utility, and therefore incumbering instead of refining the language.

The

<sup>50</sup> In Latin, the genitive and dative singular, and the nominative and vocative plural, of the first declension; the genitive singular, and nominative and vocative plural, of the second; the nominative and ablative singular of the first; the nominative, accusative, and vocative plural of the third; the nominatives, genitives, and vocatives, both singular and plural, of the fourth; and the nominative and vocatives, both singular and plural, and

the accusative plural, of the fifth declension; have the same endings. So in the principal adjective, *bona*, is the feminine nominative, vocative, and ablative singular; and also the neuter nominative, accusative, and vocative plural. Hence the precise meaning of none of these words can be understood from themselves, nor will their position express it: the sentence must be consulted to discover it. The Greek has similar imperfections.



The conjugations of the Saxon verbs, which were never numerous, were gradually disused. One simple change only was retained, to mark the past tense; and this gradually lost all variations of person or number, except the second person singular, where one inflection is still retained <sup>31</sup>.

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Many verbal changes followed in the other parts of the language. The 'mid' disappeared, and 'with' took its place; at the same time ceasing to signify 'against.' *Swa* became *so*, and *innan* diminished to *in*, or varied into the compound *into*; *tha tha* was exchanged for *when*; *tha* for *then*; *heo* for *she*. The *g* softened gradually to the *y*; and the *f* often to the *v*. *Hit* lost its aspirate; *Ich* at last became *I*; *eow*, *you*; *gan* lessened into *go*; *gif* to *if*; *hwa* became *who*; *swilc*, *such*; and several other alterations occurred, which need not be detailed here. The above remarks will give the reader an idea of the nature of the changes by which the Anglo-Saxon passed into English. It remains now to mark the chronology, and to give specimens of the transition.

The Norman language never became familiar to the great body of the English people. Fifty years after the Conquest, it is intimated that the preaching of the Norman monks at Cambridge was not understood by their audience <sup>32</sup>; and Robert of Gloucester, two centuries afterwards, remarks, that the unlearned population

<sup>31</sup> The numerous conjugations of the Greek verbs seem, like those of the Sanscrit, to be a collection of barbarous and cumbersome anomalies. Four inflections to express the past tense! I am aware that our scholars have elaborately studied to explore the fine shades and distinctions of meaning between the perfect and imperfect, and the first and second aorist. Their acknowledged failure may be taken as evidence, that what they search for did not exist. I suspect that they

have arisen from the same language having been used by many rude tribes, who became afterwards much intermixed. Some had used one tense, some the other, and the common practical language was at last compelled to retain all. The same remark is applicable to the several declensions of the Latin, Greek, and Sanscrit nouns.

<sup>32</sup> Hist. Ingulf, p. 115.

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lation had kept their native speech<sup>33</sup>. The rapid discontinuance of the French language in our literature, after the loss of Normandy, proves that it had never become popular in England. The many Saxon homilies written after the Conquest<sup>34</sup>, some Saxon laws<sup>35</sup>, and ecclesiastical canons<sup>36</sup>, and even translations of the Gospels and the Heptateuch<sup>37</sup>, prove that the Norman invasion did not extinguish the Anglo-Saxon tongue. That England preserved and used it nearly in its ancient idiom, to the death of Henry I. may be safely inferred from the style of the Saxon Chronicle<sup>38</sup>.

After the reign of Henry I. the pure Anglo-Saxon began to diminish. In that part of the Saxon Chronicle which narrates the time of Stephen, we find many Anglo-Norman words<sup>39</sup>. It was natural that this reign should be an æra of change. The country was filled with foreign knights, contending in every part for the empress Mathilda, or for the reigning prince; and their diffusion, and the disorders common to all civil wars, led to great changes in the vernacular speech.

In

<sup>33</sup> For if a man con no frenche, men tell of them right lite :  
But lowe men holden Engliche here kind speche zite.  
I wene in the world. ne is londe nether countrey none,  
That ne holdeth his kinde speche but Englande alone.

Rob. Glouc.

<sup>34</sup> See the Saxon MS. in the Cambridge Library, cited by Wanley, pp. 128. 133. 160. 166; and also those in the Bodleian Library, which he has noticed, pp. 15. 36. 40; and in the Cotton Library, pp. 199. 266, &c.

<sup>35</sup> As in the Textus Roffensis. See Wanley, p. 273.

<sup>36</sup> See Bodleian MS. Wanley, p. 65.

<sup>37</sup> Bodleian MS. Wanley, pp. 76 & 67. Cotton MS. ib. 181.

<sup>38</sup> Thus in the year 1129, which was six years before Henry I. died, we find the genuine Saxon style. The verb precedes the nominative case, and follows its accusative.

The article is *se*, and it is declined into the accusative case, *thone*; the verb is also inflected; *mid* is used for *with*; the *swa swa*, and the *tha tha* appear; also the double adverbs, *siththan*, *tha*, and the double negatives. See Sax. Chron. pp. 233, 234.

<sup>39</sup> As—and sworn the *pais* to halden, p. 243; dide God *justise*, 243; diden him thare in prisun, 242; and *pineden* him alle the ilce *pining*, 240; and beget thare privileges, 240; he hadde get his *tresor*, 238; 7 heold mycel *caritad* in the bus, 240; to landes and *rentes*, 210; mid fele men, 241; the king at the standard, 241.



In the next reign, that of Henry II. a material alteration of the ancient language took place, in the discontinuance of its unnatural inversions. This is perceptible in some of the homilies which Wanley refers to this period. In these we have several paragraphs written in the natural order of the sense<sup>40</sup>. We find also there the article *tha*, *theo*, used oftener than *seo*; and the orthography assuming a more modern shape.

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In the "Ormulin," another composition nearly as ancient<sup>41</sup>, the modernising process still more clearly appears: the order is more uniformly natural, the inflections are more unfrequent: the present phrases, *I should*, and *thou shalt*, begin to emerge; the *habbe* approaches so far to our *have*, as to be softened to *hafe*; and *with*, *the*, *to*, and *this*, are in visible use<sup>42</sup>. The spelling of it is needlessly loaded with double consonants. As the letters of the MS. are in Runic characters, it was probably written in some of those parts of the island where the Danish colonies abounded, and from their ruder pronunciation its harsher orthography may have been derived<sup>43</sup>.

In

<sup>40</sup> The natural order is very visible in this extract from the 14th Homily, though the words are Saxon: 'Wyrð writeras sæcgath thæt threo leodscipæs beoth ihaton India. Seo forme India lith to thære silhearwenæ rice. theo other lith to Medas 7 theo thridde to tham mycle garsecge. Theos thriddæ India hæth on ane sidæn theostru 7 on othre thonne grimlice garsecge.' Wanley, p. 17.

<sup>41</sup> The MS. states that it was so called from its author: 'Thiss boc iss nemmedd Orrmulum, forrthi tha Orrm itt wrohhte.' It is in MS. in the Bodleian Library, Cod. Junii 1. See Wanley, p. 59. It is a paraphrase on the Gospels.

<sup>42</sup> Of the natural order, one passage may be cited: 'Ice hafe sett her o thiss boc

amang godspelles wordess, all thurh me selfenn manig word the rime swa to fillen; acc thu shallt findenn thatt min word egg-whær thær itt is ekedd, magg hellpenn tha tha rædenn ett to sen and t'understandenn.' Ib.

<sup>43</sup> Many modernising phrases appear: 'Ic hafe don—after the little witt thatt min drihhten hafeth lenedd—thu thohhtesst thatt itt mihte well—acc all thurh Cristes hellpe—giff Ennglish folle forr lufe off Crest. Wanley says the letters are Runic. p. 59. The name is Scandinavian. The double consonants make it appear more uncouth than it really is. It shews much of the Norman simplicity and euphony, and more connected and fuller meaning, in its phrase.

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In a treatise on the Passion of St. Margaret, written in the reign of John, or Henry III. the easy modern style may be immediately recognised, though many of the Saxon words are still retained<sup>44</sup>. This therefore marks a visible stage of the transition of the language—Saxon words, but in natural order. In the book of Alfred's Proverbs, the advancing character is perceptible<sup>45</sup>; and in the pretty verses that have been often quoted, it so completely prevails, that we can scarcely fancy we are reading an antiquated composition<sup>46</sup>. In all these words, some of the other changes already alluded to may be easily traced.

Between the accession of Richard and that of Henry III. may be placed that great work, which may be considered as a landmark in this transition of our language, as well because it displays all the main features of the change, as also because it leads us to a knowledge of one of the most operating causes: I mean, Layamon's translation of the Brute of Wace, already noticed<sup>47</sup>.

Layamon

<sup>44</sup> Thus: 'Efter ure Laurdes wine and his  
passiun and his death o rode and his ariste of  
death ant efter his upastihunge as he steah  
to heovene, weren monie martyrs wepine

ba men and wummen to deathes mislice idon  
for the nome of Drihtin.' Bib. Bodl. ap.  
Wanl. 79.

<sup>45</sup> See next Chapter, Note 18.

<sup>46</sup> Ic am elder thanne ic wes  
A winter and ec a lore;  
Ic ealdi more thanne ic dede,  
Mi wit oghte to bi more.

Wel longe ich habbe child ibon,  
A worde and a dede:  
Thah ich bo a wintre ald;  
To gung ich em on rede.

Hickes's Gramm. p. 222. Wanley, p. 268.

This poem also occurs in a MS. at Cambridge, ascribed by Wanley to the reigns of Henry II. or Richard I.; which contains also homilies that display the new English idiom forming, though still retaining Saxon words: 'To dai is cumen the holie tid that me

clepath Advent. Thanked be ure Louerd Jesu Crist thit haveth isend. And hit lasteth thre wuke fulle and sum del more.' Wanley, p. 169.

<sup>47</sup> See before, p. 442.



Layamon not only shews the change of the Anglo-Saxon inversion for the easy style and natural order of the Anglo-Norman, but also the introduction of many words from the latter. The rhymed Life of Saint Margaret, noticed by Hickes in his Grammar, and from him by Dr. Johnson, is remarkable for a more advanced English style with more Norman words. Indeed, excepting in the Saxon terms, which it occasionally exhibits, it reads very much like our present idiom<sup>48</sup>.

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From the preceding instances, it will be seen that the transformation of the Anglo-Saxon into English, was progressively effected by the introduction of a natural and unaffected order in the position of the words; by the disuse of almost all of the declensions and conjugations; by the omission of the definite article, unless where wanted to point the precise meaning; by the gradual disuse of many Saxon words, and the adoption of others, taken sometimes from the related Northern tongues, at times directly from the Latin, rarely from the Provençal, and most generally and abundantly from the Norman; by the substitution of new conjunctions, prepositions, adverbs, and interjections; by the abbreviation in many cases, and in some by combinations of ancient words; and by changes in their orthoëpy and orthography. It is remarkable what softness and euphony the Anglo-Normans introduced into their familiar pronunciation. By these verbal innovations, combined with the improvements

in

<sup>48</sup> Here I mai tellen ou, wid wordes feire and swete,  
'The *vie* of one meidan, was hoten Maregrite—  
He sende it into Asye, with *messagers* ful yere,  
To a *norice* that hire wiste, children ahovede sevene—

He haved Auntioge to yeven ant to selle.  
He *serve*de nitt ant day fendes in helle—  
Sone wolde the *Sarezin* habben hire to wive.  
He said to his *Serjauns*, a maiden ic isee;  
Faret somme of myne men, ant fatchet hire to me.

Hickes's Gramm. p. 225.

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in the selection, rapidity, condensation, and conciseness of their diction, which naturally flowed from a superior cultivation of their intellectual habits and powers, that English language was formed, which, continually enriching itself with new expressions from other tongues; having allied itself with every art and science, and all the regions of literature; and having for many ages been used for every purpose of human action and thought, has now become inferior to none, and superior to most, in all those excellencies and utilities for which languages have been commended and preferred.



# HISTORY

## OF

# E N G L A N D.

## C H A P. II.

SPECIMENS OF THE PROGRESS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
AND PROSE COMPOSITION, FROM THE WRITINGS OR  
SPEECHES OF THE VARIOUS CLASSES OF SOCIETY.

**T**HAT the language of our Poetry attained an earlier cultivation than our Prose, has been already observed. The passages cited from Layamon<sup>1</sup>, will shew the commencement of the change soon after 1200. Robert of Gloucester's account of Leir and his daughters, will exhibit its state about the year 1280<sup>2</sup>. The Tales inserted before, from Brunne's Manuel, display its style in 1303<sup>3</sup>. The extracts from Hampole<sup>4</sup>, and the Romances<sup>5</sup>, are specimens of its state at the end of the reign of Edward III. The passages introduced from Gower<sup>6</sup> and Chaucer<sup>7</sup>, present the poetical language under Richard II. Of its style under Henry IV, John the Chaplain<sup>8</sup> and Occleve<sup>9</sup> have furnished instances. And the

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<sup>1</sup> See before, pp. 442—444.

<sup>2</sup> See the following Note, p. 576.

<sup>3</sup> See before, pp. 447—459. The extracts given by Mr. Warton and Mr. Ellis, from Adam Davie, a poet who flourished about 1312, may be read also at this interval.

<sup>4</sup> Ib. pp. 460—462.

<sup>5</sup> Ib. p. 47.

<sup>6</sup> Ib. pp. 487—498.

<sup>7</sup> Ib. pp. 509—535.

<sup>8</sup> Ib. pp. 539, 540.

<sup>9</sup> Ib. pp. 541—546.

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citations from Lydgate<sup>10</sup> may be referred to the period of Henry V. and his son's infancy. Thus the reader has already had abundant specimens of the English language, in its Poetry, in due succession, from the year 1200 to 1420, the inserted date of one of Lydgate's poems. The extracts from Barbour<sup>11</sup>, will exhibit its dialect in Scotland. It remains now to furnish some idea of the progress of our Prose style.

We can mark the period of the disuse of the Norman language in England, and of the confirmed ascendancy of the English, with an accuracy rarely to be obtained on such a subject. Though the natives had never, as Robert of Gloucester observes, abandoned their vernacular tongue, yet the court, the law, and the nobility, had disused it. In the beginning of the reign of Edward III. Holcot complains that children learned, first the French, and from that the Latin language, and that there was no regular instruction of youth in English<sup>12</sup>. So Higden, who died 1362, states, that boys in the schools were compelled to construe in French, and that the sons of nobles were from their very cradles instructed in the French idiom<sup>13</sup>. Norman French, therefore, triumphed in the first part of the reign of Edward III.; and accordingly Gower wrote his Sonnets in that language.

A change of fashion, however, was beginning. Rolle, who died in 1349, intimates, that the generality of the laity understood no language but the English<sup>14</sup>; and the English versifier of the romance of Arthur and Merlin, asserts, that he knew many nobles who were ignorant of French<sup>15</sup>. But the year 1362 became an æra  
of

<sup>10</sup> See before, pp. 546—552.

<sup>11</sup> See the reign of Edward I. in the First Chapter of this volume.

<sup>12</sup> Holcot. Lect. in Lib. Sap. l. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Higden Polych. l. 1. Gales' xv. Script. Angl. p. 210.

<sup>14</sup> See before, p. 460.

<sup>15</sup> Mani noble have I seighe  
That no Freynshe couthe seye.

Arthur and Merlin, ap. Scott.  
Tristrem, xxviii.



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of importance to the predominance and cultivation of the English language. An act of parliament passed in that year, recited that the French language was so unknown in England, that the parties to the law-suits which were tried in the courts of judicature, had no knowledge or understanding of what was said for or against them, because the counsel spoke French. It therefore ordered, that all causes should in future be pleaded, discussed, and adjudged in English<sup>16</sup>. This valuable law made French no longer necessary to professional profit; and English so completely superseded its competitor, that in 1385, the old translator of Higden mentions, that at that time, in all the grammar-schools of England the teaching of French was left off, and English substituted in its stead. He even names the patriotic instructors who first made this change<sup>17</sup>. So that the reign of Edward III. was clearly the period of this revolution in our language, and it had become completely accomplished within nine years after that sovereign's death.

In collecting a chronological series of passages from our old prose writers, to shew the progress of the language, we may begin with the MS. of Alfred's Sayings, which Wanley places about the reign of Richard I<sup>18</sup>. The year 1200 may be taken as near the  
time

<sup>16</sup> Stat. 36 Edw. 3. c. 15.

<sup>17</sup> Trevisa, in his translation of Higden, says, that John Cornwaile, a master of grammar, changed "the lore in grammar scole," and that Richard Pineriche learned the manner of teaching from him. See the passage in the following Note 25.

<sup>18</sup> It was in MS. in the Cotton Library, Galba, A 19; but that copy is spoilt. It began thus:—'At Sifforde seten theines manie, fele Biscopes, fele boc-lered, Elles prude, Cnichtes egliche. Ther was Erl Alfrich of the lage, swuthe wis, ec Alfrede, Engle hirde, Engle derling. On Engelonde he was King. hem he gan laren, swo hi heren mihten, hu

hi here lif leden scholden. Alfrede he was on Engelond a king wel swithe strong. he was King and Clerc. wel he luvede Godes werc. he was wise on his word and war on his speche. He was the wisest man that was on Englelond.' Wanley, p. 231. Spelman gives a further extract in his Life of Alfred:

'Thus quath Alfrede, Engle frofre; wolde ye nu liven and lusten yure louerd, He yu wolde wisen wiseliche thinges; hu ye mihten werlds wurthecepe welden and ec yure soule samne to Creste. Wise weren the cwethen the saide the King Alfrede. Mildeliche I mune yu, mine dere frend, arme and edilede luviende, that ye all drede yure drihten Crist, luviend him and licen,  
for

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time of its composition. It consists chiefly of Saxon words, but it has much of the Norman easy order, softening of their pronunciation, abbreviation of their orthography, and style of phrase, though with scarcely any Norman words. It therefore marks strikingly the first period of the transition of the Anglo-Saxon into English.

The style of Robert of Gloucester is so little like poetry, and his long lines approach so nearly to prose, that we may refer to an extract from his Chronicle as illustrating the state of our language in 1280. The attentive reader will observe a considerable deviation from the preceding specimen. Though full of Saxonisms, it is yet more advanced towards our present English than even Alfred's Proverbs. The innovating effects of the conversations and business of above half a century, are visible in the Chronicler's account of Leir and his daughters<sup>19</sup>.

The

for he is louerd of lif. He is one God over all Godnesse. He is one blisse over alle blessedness. He is one manne, milde maister, he, one folce fader and frofre. He is one riht wis and riche King that hem ne scal be wane noht of his will, hwo him here on werlde, wurthend and eth. Thus cwath Aluerd, Englefrofre. He mai no riht Cing ben—but he be boc-lered, and wis o loage, and he hise writes wel icweme, and he cunne letres, locen himselve hu he scal his lond lageliche holden.—The next passages contain some attempts to rhyme:

‘ Thus cwath Aluerd, Engle frofre, the

Erl and te Atheling, tho ben under the Cing the lond to *leden*, mid lageliche *deden*, bothe the Clerc and te *Cniht*, demen evenliche *riht*: For after that te man *soweth*, therafter he scal *mowen*; and eir ilces mannes dom to his ogen dure charigeth.

‘ Thus cwath Aluerd; the Cniht behoveth, ceneliche to mowen, or to werce the lond of hunger and of heregong, that the Chureche have *grith*; and the Cherl be in *frith*, his sedes to *sowen*, hise medes to *mowen*, his plowes to driven to ure alre bilif. This is the Cnihtes lage to locen that it wel fare.’ Spelman's Alfred, pp. 127, 128.

<sup>19</sup> On the first part of Robert's story of Leir, he says—

Thre dogtren this kyng hadde, the eldest Gonorille,  
The mydmest hatte Regan; the gongost Cordeille.  
The fader hem lovede alle ynog, ac the gougost mest;  
For heo was best and fairest, and to hautenesse drow lest.  
Tho the Kyng to elde com, alle thre he brogte  
Hys dogtren to fore hym, to wyte of here thoughte.  
For he thogte hys kyndom dele among hem thre;  
And lete hem ther with spousi, wel whare he mygte bi se.  
To the eldest he seide first, “ Dogter ich bidde the,  
Sey to me al clene thin herte, how muche thou lovest me.”

‘ Myu



The improvement which our prose style received from the cultivators of our vernacular poetry, is shewn in the prose works of the venerable Hermit of Hampole, whose poems we have already noticed,

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‘Myn heye Godes,’ quoth this mayde, ‘to wytnesse I take echon,  
That y love more in myn herte thi leve bodi one:  
Than myn soule and my lyf, that in my bodi ys.’

Tho fader was tho glad yuow whan he herde this.  
“My leve dogter” he seide tho, “for thou hast in love ydo  
Myn olde lyf byfore this, and bifore thi soule also.  
Ych wol the marie wel with the thridde part of my londe,  
To the noblest bacheler, that thyn herte wol to stonde.”

The other sister having answered in a similar manner, Cordelia is asked:—

‘Sire,’ heo seyde, ‘Y leve not that my sustren al soth seide.  
Ac for me myself, ich wol soth segge of this dede.  
Ych the love, as the mon that my fader ys;  
And ever habbe y loved as my fader, and ever wole y wys.  
And gef thou wolt get theruppe more asche and wyte of me;  
Al the ende of love and the grond, ich wol segge the.  
As muche as thou hast, as muche thou art worth y wys,  
And so muche ich love the. Tho ende of love ys this.’

Robert, after describing Leir’s anger with Cordelia; his dividing his kingdom between his other daughters, and their subsequent ingratitude to him; thus describes the king’s feelings, on being taunted by them with his poverty:

This word dude much sorwe this seli old Kyng,  
That atwytede hym and ys stat, that he nadde hym self nothing.  
That word brak neg ys herte; and long he yt understod  
That ys child atwiste ys poverte, that hadde al is god.

Leir then resolves to visit Cordelia, the daughter whom he had himself so ill-treated:

In tho schip, as other prynces in gret pruyde he bihulde;  
And he nadde mid hym bute twei men, hym thoghte ys herte feld:  
He thought on the noblei, that he hadde in ybe;  
He wep; the terus rounedoun; that deol it was to se.  
Mid goxing and mid gret wop, thus bigan ys mone.  
“Alas! alas! the luthur wate! that fylest me thus one;  
That thus clene me bryngust adoun. Wyder schal y be brogt?  
Leve dogter Cordeille! to sothe thou seidest me;  
That as muche as ych hadde, y war worth. They ne levede the.  
Away! dogter Cordeille! Wyder schal ich now fle?  
So much ich habbe the mysdo, that y ne dar the se.”

Rob. Glouc. pp. 29—35.

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noticed, and who has not received his due portion of fame, for the activity of his intellect, and the utility of his works to our infant English. He wrote several professional compositions in prose; from one of which, his “*Crafte of Deyng*,” a passage may be cited<sup>20</sup>, illustrative of the last devotions recommended at that time<sup>21</sup>. As Rolle died in 1349, he belongs to the reign of Edward II. and to the first part of Edward III. In the same MS. that contains this piece, is another prose work of the same period, and apparently by the same author, which, like the former, shews a lucid and flowing style. One passage, a simile, pursued at some length, may amuse<sup>22</sup>. It is taken from the ‘*twelve profits of tribulation*.’ We may place both these specimens about 1340. They shew a freedom

<sup>20</sup> It is a MS. in the British Museum, Bib. Reg. 17. C 18.

<sup>21</sup> It is a MS. in the British Museum:—  
“Also aftirwarde, with alle the instance and devocion that he may, with hert and mouth, let him cry to our blessed Lady Seynt Mary, that is moste spedefull and moste redy meue, and helpe of alle synfull men to God, seyng thus, ‘O gloriouse Quene of heven! Modir of mercy and refuge of alle synfull men! reconsile me to thi swete son my Lorde Jhu, and pray for me, synfull wreche, to his gret mercy, that for love of the, swete lady, he wolde foryeve me my synnys.’ Than lete hym prey to Aungelis and sey thus, ‘Holy Aungels of heven! I besech you, that ye wold assiste to me, that shall now passe out of this worlde, and myghtyly deliver, and kepe me from alle myne enemys, and take my soule unto youre blssed company. And namely thou, gode blissed aungell! that haste bene my contynuell keper, ordeynyng of God.’ Than let hym pray the same wyse, devoutly, to all the apostilis, martiris, confessours and virgyns, and specially to the Seynt, which he loved and worshipped moste specially in

his hele, that thai wyll help hym.” Ham-pole’s MS. Bib. Reg. 17. C 18. p. 34.

<sup>22</sup> “The sevynt profet of tribulacion is, that it spredith abred or opynyth thyne hert to receyve the grace of God: for Gold with many strokys of the hammyr, spredith abrode a pece of golde or of silver, to make a vessell for to put in wyne or precieuse liquore—And considre, as the more precieuse metalle is more ductible and obeynge to the strokes of the goldsmyth; so the more precieuse and meke herte is more paciente in tribulacion. And alle thogh the sharp stroke of tribulacion turmenteth the, yet comforte the; for the goldsmith, Alle-mygthy God, holdyth the hammer of tribulacion in his hond and knoweth full welle what thou maiste suffir, and mesurith hys smytynge after thi frele nature: he wille not thou be than as metalle in a boystros gobett, withoute spredynge of shape, as harde hertis bene without techyng—Ne wolde thou not be as an olde friynge pan, that for frelte of a litell stroke al to breste in mannys brekyng.” MS. Bib. Reg. 17. C 18. p. 19.



dom of style and manner that would not disgrace the reign of Henry VIII. They prove that our English prose was then well formed.

Of English composition in the year 1356, we have an example in the curious work of Sir John Mandeville. At the end of his "Voiage and Travaile," which he wrote in English as well as in Latin and French, he says, that he 'fulfilled these thinges and put them in his book,' in this year. An extract from his prologue and conclusion will shew sufficiently his style<sup>23</sup>. He died at Liege in 1371. His book is a singular medley, of ancient fables, his own observations, and his compilations from travellers who had preceded him.

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<sup>23</sup> "We oughte for to chalenge the heritage, that oure fadre lafte us, and do it out of hethene mennes hondes. But nowe pride, covetyse and envye han so enflawmed the hertes of lordes of the world, that thei are more besy for to disherite here neyghbores, more than for to chalenge, or to conquere here righte heritage before seyde. And the comoun peple, that wolde putte here bodyes and here catelle, for to conquere our heritage, thei may not don it, withouten the lordes. For a semblee of peple withouten a cheventeyn, or a chief lord, is as a flock of scheep withouten a schepperde; the which departeth and desparpleth, and wyten never whedre to go. But wolde God, that the temporel lordes and alle worldly lordes weren al gode accord, and with the comen peple, woulden taken this holy viage over the see. Thanne I trowe wel, that within a lityl tyme, oure righte heritage before seyde scholde be reconseyled and put in the hondes of the righte heires of Jesu Crist.

And for als inoche as it is longe tyme passed, that ther was no generalle passage ne vyage over the see; and many men desiren for to here speke of the Holy Lond, and han thereof gret solace and comfort;

I John Maundeville, knyght, alle be it I be not worthi, that was born in England, in the zeer of our Lord 1322, in the day of Seynt Michelle; and hidre to have ben longe tyme over the see, and have seyn, and gen thorghe manye diverse londes, and many provynces kingdomes and iles, and have passed thorghe Tartarye, Percy, Ermony the litylle and the grete; thorghe Lybye, Caldee, and a gret partie of Ethiope; thorghe Amazoyne, Inde the lesse and the more, a gret partie; and thorghe out many othere iles, that ben abouten Inde; where dwellen many dyverse folkes, and of dyverse maneres and lawes, and of dyverse schappes of men. Of whiche londes and iles, I schalle speke more pleyntly hereaftre. And I schalle devise zou sum partie of thinges that there ben, whan time schalle ben, aftre it may best come to my mynde; and specyally for hem, that wyll and are in purpos for to visite the holy citee of Jerusalem, and the holy places that are there aboute. And I schalle telle the weye, that thei schulle holden thidre. For I have often tymes passed and ryden the way, with gode companye of many lordes. God be thouked.

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In 1382, we have specimens of the common vulgar style of the populace, in the writings circulated among the mob, at the time of the great insurrection in the reign of Richard II<sup>24</sup>. As they were meant to affect the popular mind, they were of course composed in their ordinary language. They have however all the air of modern phrase, and are proofs, that our prose style was not exclusively formed by our writers, but arose amid the business and conversation of common life. Courts and colleges in former times deviated into

(NOTE 23  
continued.)

And gee schulle undirstonde, that I have put this boke out of Latyn into Frensche, and translated it agen out of Frensche into Englyssche, that every man of my nacioun may undirstonde it. But lordes and knyghtes, and othere noble and worthi men, that conne Latyn but litylle, and han ben begonde the see, knowen and undirstonden, gif I erre in devisyng, for forgetyng, or elles; that thei mowe redresse it and amende it. For thinges passed out of longe tyme from a mannes mynde, or from his syght, turnen sone into forgetyng. Because that mynde of man ne may not ben comprehended ne withholden, for the freelte of mankynde."—Voiage and Travaile, pp. 4—7. Printed from the Cotton MS. 1725; 1727.

At the end of his book, he says, "Now I am comen hom, mawgree myself, to reste: for gowtes, artetykes, that me distreynen, tho diffynen the ende of my labour, aenst my wille; God knowethe. And thus takyng solace in my wreeched reste, recordyng the tyme passed, I have fulfilled theise thinges, and putte hem wryten in this boke, as it wolde come into my mynde, the zeer of grace 1356, in the 34 zeer that I departede from oure countrees." *Ib.* p. 383.

<sup>24</sup> Knyghton has preserved these political squibs of the day: "Jakke Mylner asket helpe to turne his mylne aright. He bath grounden smal, smal; the Kings sone of

heven, he schal pay for alle. Loke thy mylne go aryght, with the foure sayles, and the post stande in steadfastnesse. With ryght and with myght, with skyl and with wylle, lat myght helpe ryght; and skyl go before wille and ryght before myght, than goth oure mylne aryght. And if myght go before ryght, and wylle before skylle, than is oure mylne mys adyght."

"Jakke Carter pryes gowe alle that ge make a gode ende of that ge have begunnen and doth wele, and ay, bettur and bettur: for at the even, men neryth the day. For if the ende be wele, than is alle wele. Lat Peres the plowman, my brother, duelle at home, and dyght us corne, and I will go with gowe and helpe that y may to-dyghte youre mete and youre drynke, that ge none fayle. Lokke that Hobbe robbyoure be wele chastyed for lesyng of goure grace, for ge have gret nede to take God with gowe in alle goure dedes. For nowe is tyme to be war."

"John Balle gretyth gow wele alle and doth gow to understande, he hath rungen youre belle. Nowe ryght and myght, wylle and skylle. God spede every ydele.—Stonde manlyche togedyr in trewthe and helpe ge trewthe and trewthe schal helpe gowe. Now regneth pride in pris, and covetys is hold wys, and lecherye withouten shame, and glotonye withouten blame. Envy regneth with tresone, and slouth is taken in grete sesone." Knyghton *Ckron.* pp. 2637, 2638.



into affected diction. The ordinary classes of life are always natural, simple, and easy in their colloquial phrase, because they are not qualified to understand any other; and from such elements, a perspicuous and impressive style may most successfully be framed.

As Wickliffe died in 1384, the specimens of his English style may be inserted in this place<sup>25</sup>. Though at least fifty years later, it was not so cultivated as the Hermit of Hampole's, nor even of some of his contemporaries. Whether this arose from his collegiate life, his scholastic studies, or some want of facility or fluency of thought, or clearness of his ideas, cannot be ascertained; but his Postils, which, being addressed to the people at large, ought to have been in the most familiar phrase, are not so well expressed, nor so immediately intelligible, as either Rolles, or those which follow. His translation, however, of the Prodigal Son<sup>26</sup>, has all the merit of the best style of that time, and reads very interestingly in his venerable diction. Perhaps it would be difficult to make it unimpressive.

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<sup>25</sup> "On many maneris oure religious desteyven hemself in vanite: first they refreyneyn noght here mouthe in praiseris but forgeten to worche. As gif praiseris weren the beste thing, bi whiche men serven & plesen to God. On that other manere relegious ben veyn, whanne thei lernen here owne reulis and leven the reule that god gaf; and ocupien hem in this lore to seye and synge withouten book, as gif this pleside most to God. On the thridde manere thes ordreis ben veyn, that prechen japis to begge better and to susteyne here cloistris and houses and other godes, that thei coveiten; and certes thes himpes failen here as mouled gras that were unteddid; for that gras moot nedis rote and fade —

"Knewen nought thes newe ordreis and thes cloistris with newe houses and other rentis, that thei han founden what scholde move hem to love thus & leve relegioun, that God

hath goven. It is a blaspheme and bileve houever that men speken here."—Wickliffe's Postils, Claud. D 8. p. 145.

<sup>26</sup> "A man hadde twey sones: and the yonger of hem seide to the fadir, 'Fadir! geve me the porcioun of catel that fallith to me;' and he departide to hem the catel. And not aftir manye dayes, whanne alle thingis weren gederid togider: the yongere sone wente forth in pilgrimage into a fer cuntree, and ther he wastide hise goodis in lyvyng lecherously. And after that he hadde endid alle thingis, a strong hungur was maad in that cuntree and he bigan to have nede. And he wente and drough him toon of the cyteseynes of that cuntre, and, he sente him into his toum: to feed swyn. And he coueitide to fille his wombe of the coddis that the hoggis eeten; and no man gaf him.

And

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In 1385, we have a specimen of an old Chronicler's English, written in that year by Nich. Trevisa, in the Prologue to his translation of Higden's Polychronicon; which may be quoted, not only for its contributing to mark the chronological progress of our language, but also for the information which it affords on the decline of the French, and the ascendancy of the English tongue<sup>27</sup>.

To

(NOTE 26  
continued.)

And he turnede agen into himsilf: and seide, 'how manye hirid men in my fadir's hous had plente of looues: and I perisch here thorou hungur! I schal rise up and go to my fadir, and I schal seye to him: fadir I haue synned into heuene and bfore thee, and now I am not worthi to be clepid thi sone: make me as oon of thin hirid men.' And he roos up and cam to his fadir; and whanne he was yit afer, his fadir sigh him, and was stirid by mersy, and he ran: and fel on his necke, and kisside him. And the sone seide to him, 'fadir I have synned into heuene and bfore thee: and now I am not worthi to be clepid thi sone.' And the fadir seide to his seruantis 'swithe brynge ye forth the first stole: and clothe ye him, and gyue ye a ryng in his hond: and schoon on hise feet. And brynge ye a fat calf and sleygh ye: and ete we, and make we feeste. For this my sone was deed, and hath lyued agen: he perischide, and is founden:' and alle men bigunnen to ete. But his eldre sone was in the feeld; and whanne he cam, and neighede to the hous, he herde a symfonye and a croude. And he clepide oon of the seruantis: and axide what these thingis weren. And he seide to him, 'thi brother is comen: and thi fadir slough a fatt calf, for he resseyuede him saaf.' And he was wrooth, and wolde not come yn: therfor his fadir gede out: and bigan to preye him. And he answerde to his fadir: and seyde, 'lo so manye yeeris I serue thee: and I neuere brak thi comaundement and thou neuere gaue to me a kide that I with my frendis schulde haue etun. But aftir that this thi sone that

hath deuourid his substance with hooris, cam, thou hast slayn to him a fat calf.' And he seide to him, 'sone thou art euermore with me: and alle my thingis ben thine. But it bihofte to make feest and to haue joye: for this thi brother was deed and lyuyde agen, he perischide and is foundun.'" Wickliffe's Test. Baber's ed. p. 76.

<sup>27</sup> "Children in scole agenst the usage and manir of all other nations beeth compelled for to leue hire owne langage, & for to construe hir lessons & hire thynges in Frenche; and so they haveth seethe Normans came first into Engeland—Also gentilmen children beeth taught to speke Frensche, from the tyme that they bith rokked in hire cradell and kunneth speke and play with a childes boche; and uplondissche men will likne himself to Gentylnen, and foundith with greet besynesse for to speke Frensche to be told of. This maner was moche used to for first deth, and is sith some dele changed. For Iohn Cornewaile a maister of Gram<sup>r</sup> changed the lore in Grammer scole and construction of Frensche into Englishe: and Richard Pencriche lernede the manere techynge of him, as other men of Pencriche. So that now the yere of oure Lord a thousand thre hundred and four score and five, and of the Seconde Kyng Richard aftur the Conquest nyne and (in) alle the Grammere scoles of Engilond, children leveth Frensche and constrwth and learneth an Englishe," &c. Trevisa, Harl. MS. N° 1900. He dates the conclusion of his translation, 1387.



To this we may also add an extract from his translation of the Sermon of the Archbishop of Armagh, preached before the Pope at Avignon in 1357. It was chiefly directed against the Mendicant Friars. The passage is interesting for its information, that at one time 30,000 scholars were studying at Oxford; and that the number had become reduced to 6000. It also implies the endeavour of the friars to excel the other clergy in their libraries, and pupils<sup>28</sup>.

In 1386, we have a curious instance of the style of the London tradesmen, in the Petition of the Mercers' Company to the king in parliament<sup>29</sup>. It shews that a good style was forming in the busy metropolis, and is one of the earliest petitions from the city to the parliament, that history has preserved.

In

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<sup>28</sup> In attacking the Mendicant Orders for seducing children from their parents, he says—

“Hereof cometh grete damage bothe to the peple and to the clergie also. To the peple, for many men for what thei loveth best in this worlde, that is her owne children. Also hit is grete damage to the clergie for now in the Universitees of the rewme of Englonde: for children beth so ystole from her fadres and modres, lewed men in everiche place withholdeth her children, and sendeth hem nought to the Universite; for hem is lever make hem erthe tilyers, and have hem, than sende hem to the Universite and lese hem. So that ghet in my tyme in the *Universite of Oxenford were thritty thousand scholers at ones: and now beth unnethe sixe thousand*. And me trowith that the grettist occasioun and cause why scoiers beth so withdrawe; hit is for children beth so begiled and ystole. And y se noon gretter damage to al the clergie than in this damage.

Also there is more grete damage that undoth and distruyeth the seculers of al maner faculte, for those ordres of beggers, for endeles wynnynge that thei geteth by

beggyng of the forseide privyleges of schriftes and sepultures and othere; thei beth now so multiplyed in coventes and in persons, that many men tellith that in general studies unnethe is yfounde to sillying a profitable book of the faculte of art, of dyvynyte, of lawe canoun, of phisik, other of lawe civile, but alle bookes beth ybought of freres. So that in everich covent of freres is a noble librarie and a grete; and so that everich frere that hath state in scole siche as thei beth now, hath an huge libraryc. And also y sent of my sugettes to scole thre or foure persons; and hit is seide me that somme of hem beth come home agen, for thei myght nought fynde to selle oon gode bible, nother othere covenable bookes—hit semeth that herof schuld come siche an ende that no clergie schuld leve in holy chirche, but oonlich in freres; and so the feith of holy chirche were loste but oonlich in freres.”

<sup>29</sup> The first paragraphs of this petition are as follows:—

“To the moost noble and worthiest Lordes, moost ryghtful and wysest Conseille to owre lige

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In 1388, we have another indication of the style of the metropolis, in the Sermons preached in that year at St. Paul's Cross, by 'Maister Thomas Wymbilton<sup>30</sup>.' They prove that the Anglo-Saxon

lige Lorde the Kyng, compleynen, if it lyke to yow, the folk of the Mercerye of London, as a membre of the same Citee, of many wronges subtilis, and also open oppressions, ydo to hem by longe tyme here before passed—

'Of which oon was, where the eleccion of Majraltie is to be to the fre men of the Citee, bi gode and paisible avys of the wysest and trewest, at o day in the yere frelich, there noughtwithstondyng the same fredam or fraunchise, Nichol Brembre wyth his upberers, p̄posed hym the yere next after John Northampton Mair of the same Citee, with stronge honde as it is ful knowen, and thourgh debate and strenger partye ageins the pees bfore purveyde was chosen Mair in destruccion of many ryght For, in the same yere, the forsaid Nichol, withouten nede, ayein the pees, made dyv̄se enarmynges bi day and eke bi nyght, and destruyd the Kynges trewe lyges, som with open slaughtre, some bi false emprisonement and some fledde the Citee for feere, as it is openlich knowen.

'And so ferthermore, for to susteyne thise wronges, and many othere, the next yere after, the same Nichol ayeins the forsaid fredam and trewe cōes did crye openlich, that no man sholde come to chese her Mair, but such as were sompned, and tho that were sompned were of his ordynance and after his avys. And in the nyght next after folwyng, he did carye grete quantitee of Armure to the Gyldehall, with which as wel straungers of the Contree as othere of withinne were armed on the morwe, ayeins his own proclamacion, that was such that no man shulde be armed; and certain bushments were laide, that when free men of the Citee come to chese her Maire, breken up armed, cryinge

with loud voice, Sle, Sle, folwing hem, wherthourgh the peple, for feere, fledde to houses, and other hidynges, as in londe of Werre adradde to be ded in cōe.' Plac. Parl. vol. 3. p. 225.

<sup>30</sup> These are in MS. in the British Musuem. 'For right as gee seen, that in the tilyng of the material vyne ther ben diverse labouris; for summe kutte away the voide braunchis; summe maken forkis and railles to bere up the vynes; and summe diggen away the olde eerthe from the roote and leven there fatter. And alle these officers ben so necessarie to the Vyne, that gif ony of hem faile, it shal harme gretly or destroye the Vyne. But the Vyne be kut, it shal waxe wilde. But gif she be railid, She shal be overgoo with netles and weedis. But the roote be fattid with dunge, She for feebilnesse shulde waxe bareyne.

'Rightsoo in the chirche been needful these thire officers. Preesthod, Knyghthod and laboreris. To prestis it falleth, to kutte away the voide braunches of synnes, with the swerd of her tunge. To knyghtis it falleth, to lette wronges and theftis to be doo; and to mayntene Goddis lawe and hem that ben techers therof; and also to keepe the londe fro enemyes of oothere londes. And to laboreris it falleth, to travaile bodily; and with her soor swet, gete out of the eerthe the bodily lufode, for hem and for oothere parties: and there statis ben also needful to the chirche, that noon may wel be withouten oothere: for gif preshod lackide, the peepil, for defaute of knowyng goddis lawe, shulden waxe wilde on vices and dye goostli. And gif knyghthod lackede and men to rule the peepil bi lawe and hardnesse, theves and enemyes shulden so encrease, that no man shulde lyve in pees; and gif the laborers



Saxon was disused, and that our present English was substantially formed. Being addressed to a London audience, they may be presumed to be in the usual diction of those to whom they were repeated. They shew the increased cultivation which our old English was receiving.

In the duke of Gloucester's written confession, taken in 1397, we have a specimen of the most polished style of the language at that period<sup>31</sup>. As one of the royal family, son of Edward III, and brother

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laborers weren not, both preestis and knyghtis mosten ben acremen and herdis, and ellis they shulden for defaute of bodily sustenance dye.' Wymbilton's Sermon, MS. Bib Reg. 18. A 17.

<sup>31</sup> The duke, before he was murdered, delivered it written 'be his own honde' to the Commissioner, who transmitted it to Richard II. The first part, and the last paragraph, will be a sufficient specimen:

"I Thomas of Wodestok, the viii day of Septembre, the zeer of my Lord the Kyng on and twenty, bi the vertue of a Commission of my Lord the Kyng the same zeer directid to William Rikhill Justice, the which is comprehendid more pleynly in the forseid Commission, knowleche, that I was on wyth steryng of other men to assente to the makyng of a Commission; In the which Commission I amonges other restreyned my Lord of his freedom, and toke upon me amonge other, Power Reall, trewly naght knowyng ne wytyng that tyme that I dede azeyns his Estate ne his Realte, as I dede after and do now. And forasmuche as I knew afterward that I hadde do wronge, and taken upon me more than me owght to do, I submittede me to my Lord, and cryed hym mercy and grace, and zet do als lowlych and as mekely as any man may, and putte me heygh and lowe in his mercy and in his grace, as he that always hath ben ful of mercy and of grace to all other.

Also, in that tyme that I came armed into my Lordes p̄sence, and into his Palais, howsoever that I dede it for drede of my lyf, I knowleche for certain that I dede evyll, and azeyns his Regalie and his Estate: Wherfor I submitt me lowly and mekely into his mercy and to his grace.

Also in that that I took my Lordes L̄res of his Messagers, and opened hem azeyns his leve, I knowleche that I dede evyll: Wherfor I putt me lowly in his grace.

Also, in that that I sclaudred my Loord, I knowleche that I dede evyll and wykkedly, in that that I spake it unto hym in sclauderouse wyse in audience of other folk. But by the wey that my sowle schall to, I mente none evyll therin. Nevertheles I wote and I knowleche that I dede evyll and unkunynghelych: Wherfor I submitt me heygh and lowe in his grace.—

And therfor I beseche my lyege and souverayn Loord the Kyng, that he wyll of his heygh grace and benyngnytee accepte me to his mercy and his grace, as I that putt my lyf, my body, and my goode holy at his wyll, as lowlych, as mekelych as any creature kan do or may do to his lyege Loord. Besechyng to his heygh Lordeschippe, that he wyll, for the passion that God soffred for all mankynde, and the compassion that he hadde of his Modir on the Cros, and the pytie that he hadde of Marye Maudeleyne, that he wyll vouchesauf for to have compassion and pytie; and to accepte me unto his

mercy

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brother of the Black Prince, we have in his phrases an instance of the diction of an accomplished gentleman of his day; yet it certainly has not the ease and merit of some of the specimens which we have already adduced. It may have been the fashion to affect a style that should differ from the clear vulgar phrase.

The prose works of Chaucer claim to be noticed about this time. They are highly curious, in many respects. They not only shew the prose style of a highly cultivated mind and poet, but they are specimens of the 'straunge English' which some complained of, and of that 'ornate style,' which he declares himself to have aimed at and valued. His 'Testament of Love' is an instance, that scholars have sometimes spoiled language instead of improving it. But as it is of no use to perpetuate the memory of his defects, because, as it has been remarked before, the age is more influenced by an author's beauties than by his faults; some of the happier passages of this great poet's prose style, in this work, will be transcribed in the notes<sup>32</sup>. There is at times an eloquence about them, which

announces

(NOTE 31  
continued.)

mercy and to his grace, as he that hathe ever bene ful of mercy and of grace to all his lyeges, and to all other that have nught bene so neygh unto hym as I have bene, thogh I be unworthy." Plac. Parl. vol. 3. p. 379.

<sup>32</sup> O Glorye ! glorie ! thou art none other-thinge to thousands of folke but a great sweller of cares—

A wise gentill heart looketh after vertue and none other bodily joies alone—Is there any thing to thee more precious than thyself—Thou shalt have in thy power that, thou woldest never lose & that in no way may be taken fro thee—A soule dieth never. Virtue and goodnesse, evermore with the soule, endureth; & this knot is perfite blesse.

Glorie of fame in this worlde, is not but hindering of glory in time comming.—But if thou wolt make comparison to ever, what joy

maiest thou have in yearthly name, it is a faire likenesse, a pees or one grayne of wheat, to a thousand ships full of corne charged. What nombre is betweene the one & the other? and yet mowe both they bee nombred, and end in reckenynge have.

Every wight in soche yearthly weale habundaunt, is hold noble, precious, benigne & wise to doe what he shall, in any degree that menne him set, all be it that the soth be in the contrary of all tho thinges. But he that can never so well him behave & hath vertue habundaunt, in manyfold maners; & be not wealthied with soche yearthly goodes, is hold for a foole & saied his wit is but sotted.

Gentilnesse in kinrede maken not gentil linage in succession, without desert of a mans owne selfe. Where is now the line of Alisaundre the noble, or els of Hector of Troie. Who is descended of right blood of  
lyne



announces a vigorous as well as a cultivated mind. As the style of every individual is most natural when he is talking of himself, the singular passage in which, like Cicero, he displays the pleasure he took in contemplating his own deserts, may be also added <sup>33</sup>.

We have now presented the progress of our English language to the end of the fourteenth century. But to give a more expansive view of it, by shewing the style of the various ranks and classes of life,

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lyne fro King Artour? Parde! Sir Perdicas whome that King Alisandre made to been his heyre in Greece, was of no Kinges blood, his dame was a tombistere. Of what kinred been the Gentils in our days. I trowe therefore if any good be in gentillesse, it is onely that it seemeth a maner of necessite bee input to gentilmen that they shoulde not varien fro the vertues of their auncesters. Certes all maner lineage of men ben evenliche in birth, for one father maker of all goodnes enformed hem all, & all mortall folke of one seed are greyned.

A wise gentill heart looketh after vertue and none other bodily joies alone—Lo howe been confounded with errour and folly. The knowing of very cause and way is goodnesse and vertue. Is there any thing to thee more precious than thyself? Thou shalt have in thy power, that, thou wouldest never lese & that in no way may be taken fro thee—A soule dieth never. Vertue and goodnesse evermore with the soule endureth and this knot is perfect blisse. Then this soule in this blisse, endlesse shall endure—And when the soule is the maister over the bodie, then is a manne maister of himselfe; and a man to be a maister over himselfe, liveth in vertue and in goodnesse, and as reason of vertue teacheth.

They that sechen gold in greene trees, and wene to gader precious stones emong vines, and laine her nettes in mountaynes to fishe, & thinken to hunt in deepe seas after harte and hinde, and sechen in yearth thilke things

that surmounteth heaven. What may I of hem saie? But foolish ignoraunce misledeth. Chaucer's Test. of Love, pp. 289. 279, 280. 282. 289, 290. Old ed.

<sup>33</sup> Chaucer thus discloses to us his own opinion of the merits of his Troilus, which he puts into the mouth of Love:—"I shall tell thee, this lesson to learne, myne owe true servaunt, the noble phylosophicall poete, in Englishe, whyche evermore hym busieth and travaileth right sore, my name to encrease, wherefore all that willen me good, owe to doe him worship and reverence both; truly his better ne his pere, in schole of my rules coud I never finde. He in a treatise that he made of my servaunt Troylus, has this matter touched, and at the full this question assoiled. Certainly his noble sayngs, can I not amend. In goodness of gentil, manlich speech, without any maner of nicitie of stafieres imaginacion, in wit and in good reason of sentence, he passeth al other makers. In the boke of Troylus, the answeare to thy question maiest thou lerne, never the later, yet maie lightly thyne understanding, some-deale been learned, if thou have knowyng of these to fornsaid thynges, with that thou have understanding, of two, the last chapiters of this seconde boke, that is to saie, good to be some thing, and bad to want al maner being, for badde is nothyng els, but absence of good." Test. of Love, Book 3. p. 301. Chal. ed. p. 510.

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life, public as well as private—it will be useful to give an extract from the address of the parliamentary deputies to Richard, on announcing to him his deposition<sup>34</sup>, as an instance of the language of

<sup>34</sup> “Sire, it is wele knowe to yowe, that ther was a parlement somond of all the States of the Reaume for to be at Westmynstre, and to begynne on the Teusday in the morn of the fest of Seint Michell the Archaungell that was yesterday, by cause of the whiche sommons all the States of this londe were ther gadyrd, the whiche states hole made thes same persones that ben comen here to yowe nowe her Procuratours, and gafen hem full auctorite and power, and charged hem, for to say the wordes that we sall say to yowe in her name and on thair behalve;—And so, Sire, thes wordes and the doying that we sall say to yowe is not onlych our wordes bot the wordes and the doynges of all the States of this lond and our charge and in her name.

And he answered and sayd that he wyste wele that we wold nocht say bot os we were charged.

Sire, ye remembre yowe wele, that on Moneday in the fest of Seint Michell the Archaungell, ryght here in this chaumbre, and in what presence, ye renounsed and cessed of the state of Kyng and of Lordeship and of all the dignite and wirsshipp that longed thereto, and assoiled all your lieges of her ligeance and obesiance that longed to yowe, uppe the fourme that is contened in the same Renunciation and Cession, which ye redde yourself by your mouth, and affermed it by your othe and by your owne writing. Opon whiche ye made and ordeyned your Procuratours the Ersbysshopp of York and the Bysshopp of Hereford, for to notifie and declare in your name thes Renunciation and Cession at Westmynstre to all the States and all the people that was ther gadyrd by cause of the sommons forsayd. The whiche thus don yesterday by thes

Lordes your Procuratours, and wele herde and understonden thes renunciation and cession ware pleinelich and frelich accepted and fullich agreed by all the states and people forsayd. And over this, Sire, at the instance of all thes states and poeple ther ware certain articles of defautes in your governaunce redde there. And tho wele herd and pleinelich understonden to all the states forsaide, hem thocht hem so trewe and so notorie and knowen, that by the causes and by mo other, os thei sayd, and havying consideration to your owne wordes in your owne renunciation and cession, that ye were not worthy, no sufficeant, ne able, for to governe for your owne demerites, os it is more pleinerlych contened therein, hem thocht that was resonable and cause for to depose yowe, and her commissaries that thei made and ordeined, os it is of record ther, declared and decreed, and adjugged yowe for to be deposed and pryved, and in dede deposed yowe and pryved yowe of the astate of Kyng, and of the Lordeship contened in the renunciation and cession forsayd, and of all the dignite and wyrsshipp, and of all the administration that longed therto. And we, procuratours to all thes states and poeple forsayd, os we be charged by hem, and by hir auctorite gyffen us, and in her name, yeld yowe uppe for all the states and poeple forsayd, Homage liege and feaute, and all ligeance, and all other bondes, charges, and services that longe therto. And that non of all thes states and poeple, fro this tyme forward, ne bere yowe feyth, ne do yowe obeissance os to thar Kyng.

And he answerd and seyde, that he loked not ther after: Bot he sayde, that after all this he hoped that is Cosyn wolde be goode Lord to hym.” Plac. Parl. vol. 3. p. 424.



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of some of the first men of the nation, in a situation that must have interested their sensibility. As a specimen of the highest diction of the country, on a most solemn and dignified occasion, we will add the speeches of the new sovereign, Henry iv. to the parliament, on his elevation to the crown<sup>35</sup>. Five years after, in 1404, we have the petition of the great earl of Northumberland to the king in parliament<sup>36</sup>, and the royal answer to the petition of the commons<sup>37</sup>; which will give a further view of the style of the highest

<sup>35</sup> His words were, "In the name of Fadir, Son, and Holy Gost, I Henry of Lancastre challenge this Rewme of Yngland, and the Corone with all the membres and the appurtenances, als I that am disendit be right lyne of the blode comyng fro the gude Lorde Kyng Henry therde, and thorghe that ryght that God of his grace hath sent me, with helpe of my Kyn and of my frendes to recover it: the whiche Rewme was in poynt to be undone for defaut of Governance and undoyng of the gode Lawes."—

In his second address he said, "Sires, I thank God and yowe Spirituel and Temporel and all the Astates of the lond; and do yowe to wyte, it es noght my will that no man thynk that be waye of conquest I wold disherit any man of his heritage, franchises, or other ryghtes that hym aght to have, no put hym out of that, that he has and has had by the gude lawes and custumes of the Rewme: Except thos persons that has ben agan the gude purpose and the commune profyt of the Rewme." Plac. Parl. vol. 3. pp. 422, 423.

<sup>36</sup> "To my most dredfull and Sovereigne lige Lord, I youre humble lige beseche to yowre Hyness to have in remembrance my comyng to yowre worshipful presence into York of my free will, be yowre goodly letters, where I put me in yowre grace, as I that noght have kept yowre Lawys and Statutys as ligeance askith; and specially of gederyng of power, and gevyng of Liverees, as that

tyme I put me in yowre grace, and yit do, ye seiyng and hit like to yowre Hyness, that al graceles sholde I nat go. Wherefore I beseche yow, that yowre hygh grace be sene on me at this tyme: And of othir thynges whiche ye have examynynd me of, I have told yowe pleynly and of all I put me holy in yowre grace." Plac. Parl. vol. 3. p. 524.

<sup>37</sup> "And for als muche that the Comunes desiren that the Kyng shulde leve upon his owne, as gode reson asketh, and alle Estates thynken the same, the Kyng thanketh hem of here gode desire, willyng put it in execution als sone as he wel may. And bycause the Comunes desiren, that al that longed unto the Coroune the fourty yere of Kyng Edward, and sithe hath be departed, shulde be resumed, to that entent that the Kyng myght better leve of his owne: And for als muche that it may noght be knowen unto the Kyng whiche is of the Corowne, and whiche is not, withoute more examination, ne what hath be graunted sithe the fourty yere of Kyng Edward unto this tyme, the Kynges entent is, to assigne certeyn Lordes spirituel and certeyne Lordes temporell, and alle his Justices, and his Sergeantz, and othir suche as hym lust name, for to put in execution, als ferre as he may by the lawe of his land, or by his prerogatif, or libertee, alle the articles contened in the Petition of the Comune, in all hast that he may, in discharge of his people." Plac. Parl. vol. 3. p. 549.

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highest ranks in the country. Our specimens may be closed by some passages in the will of Henry V.<sup>38</sup>; which bring down the history of our language to the end of the period to which this Volume is devoted.

THE Reader has now before him, in these Chapters, specimens of the Language of all orders of individuals in England, from the termination of the twelfth century to the beginning of the fifteenth, of poets, chroniclers, divines, preachers, citizens, noblemen, princes of the blood, parliaments, and kings. These have been presented to him in chronological succession, that with his own eye he may be able to perceive the progress that was made, and the gradual changes which most contributed to produce it. In the passages that have been quoted, we see the vernacular prose composition of this period. The works referred to, form the most important part of our prose literature, and their authors were its principal composers. To add a long catalogue of the divines and schoolmen, who wrote Latin prose or verse, would contribute little to the history of the progressive mind of the country. It will be sufficient to refer to the ancient and modern works in which these writers have been biographically noticed. Of these, Boston, of Bury, in the fifteenth century<sup>39</sup>; Leland in the sixteenth<sup>40</sup>; Bale and Pitts soon afterwards;

<sup>38</sup> It begins thus, "In the worship of the blessed Triinite, of oure laide Saint Marie, and of alle the blessed company of Heven, I Henry, by the Grace of God Kyng of Yngland and of France, lord of Irland, atte makyng of thes presentes lettres that ordeynet and disposet to passe into the parties of France, to recover by help of God, my rightes there to me longyng, have do writte my wille and entente in manere afir foloyng."—After various bequests, he adds—"And if it so befalle that my forsaid brother Umfrey without heir mal of his body comyng departe out of this world, thanne I wol that

alle the same castils, lordships, &c. and othir possessions so geven to my said brothir Umfray after his decease, noon heir mal of his body thenne beyng on lyve, remaigne to myn heirs Kynges of Yngland, and be annexet to the Corone of Yngland for evermore.—And if it so befalle that or my dettes be fully paid, and my last Will playnly execut," &c. Royal and Noble Wills, pp. 236—242.

<sup>39</sup> Tanner has given large extracts from this work, in the preface to his *Bibliotheca Monastica*.

<sup>40</sup> Leland de Script. Brit.



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wards; and bishop Tanner, in his *Bibliotheca Monastica*, compiled in the last century; are the authors whose researches have been the most extensive and successful. But among these, Holcot, the Dominican friar, who flourished about 1330, deserves particular notice. He not only wrote some Latin Commentaries on part of the Scriptures, which are remarkable for the great range of classical authors whom he quotes, and for his repeated encomiums on knowledge and literature; but he also composed, under the name, and therefore most probably with the sanction, of the bishop of Durham, the English prelate to whom Petrarch addressed the letter which was never answered, the work entitled *Philo-biblon*; the object of which peculiarly was, to excite a love of general study; an encouragement of new books; a desire to collect them; a taste for the liberal arts; indulgence for poetry; and an increased facility to students, to read the books that were obtained<sup>41</sup>. In our next Volume, the history of our Natural and Experimental Philosophy will form a leading article; and may assist to complete the view that we have attempted to present, of the progress, diversity, and extended attainments of the English Intellect.

<sup>41</sup> It is a MS. in the British Museum, Harleian, No. 492. Some of its chapters will shew its more remarkable subjects:—Ch. 1. That the treasure of wisdom lies chiefly in books:—Ch. 2. What love should reasonably be given to books:—Ch. 9. Tho' we ought to love the works of the ancients most, yet we ought not to condemn the study of the moderns:—Ch. 11. On the preference to books on the liberal arts:—Ch. 13. We

should not entirely neglect the fables of the poets:—Ch. 15. The advantages of the love of books:—Ch. 16. How meritorious it is to write new books, and to renew old ones:—Ch. 18. That we should collect a great abundance of books, to the common profit of scholars, and not merely for our own pleasure:—Ch. 19. On the best mode of communicating our books to all students. MS. Harl. No. 492.

FINIS.

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